

# Sight and Sound



Film-makers on their favourite films:

David Cronenberg, Jerry Lewis,  
Deborah Kerr, Terry Gilliam,  
Edward Yang, Claire Denis,  
Pedro Almodóvar and more

**'Shallow Grave':**

Danny Boyle's new thriller

Beijing diary: daytime TV  
and Zhang Yimou

Paul Schrader celebrates  
Jean Renoir

**'Four Weddings':**

the final reckoning

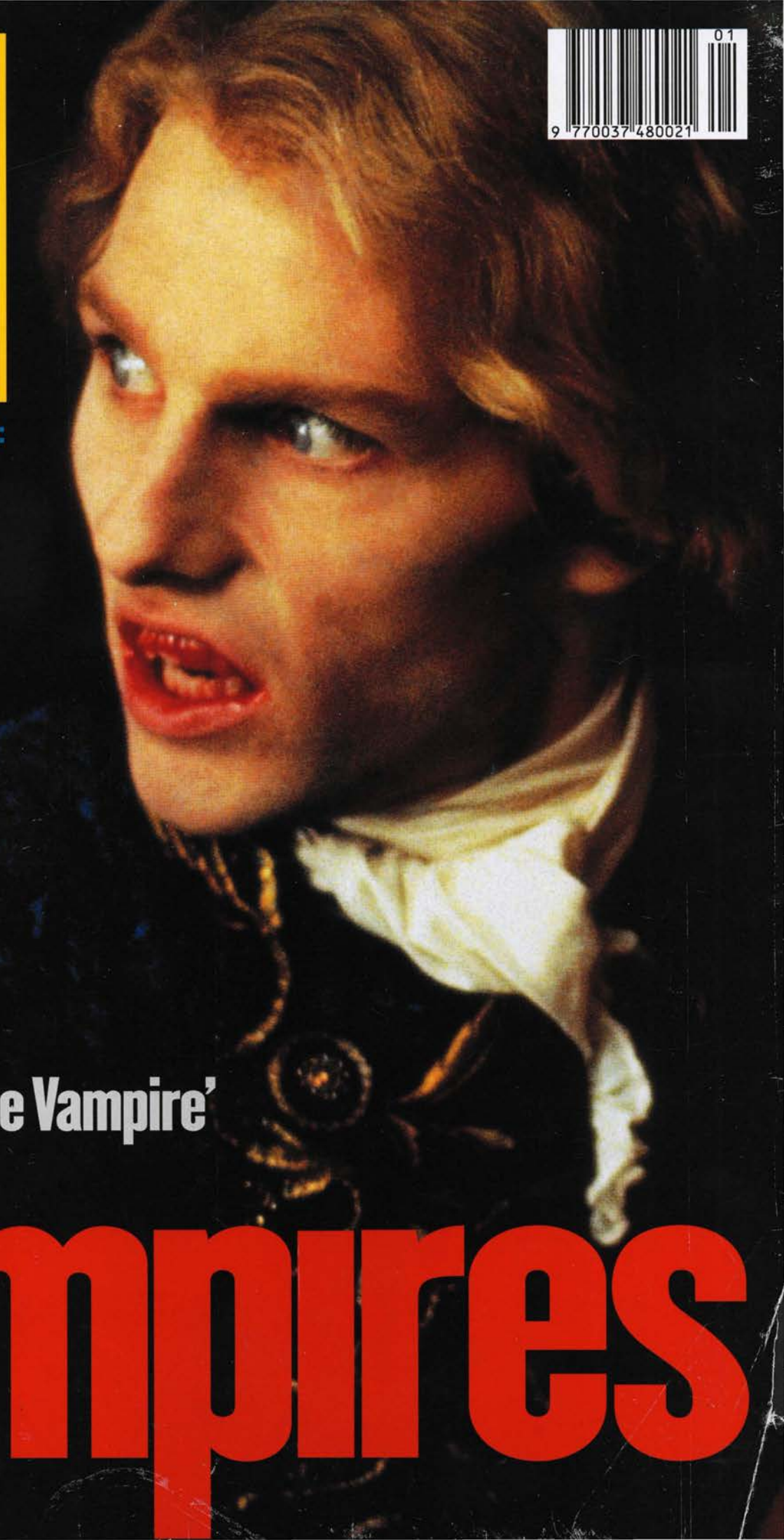
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# Sight and Sound

January 1995



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'Lawrence of Arabia': 30



'Shallow Grave': 34

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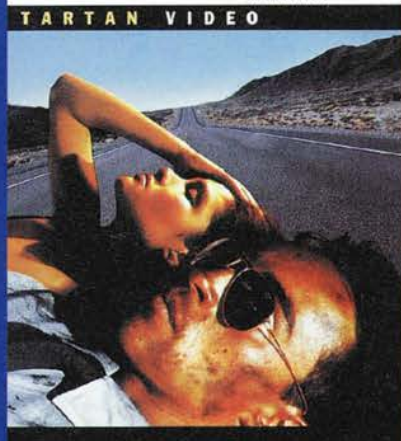
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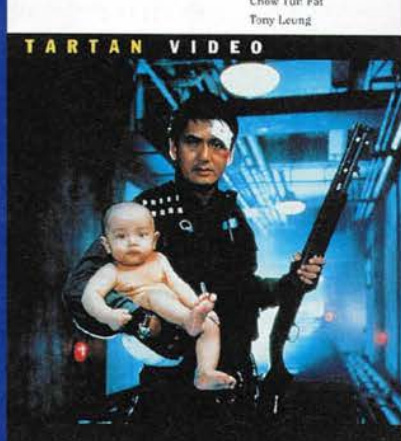
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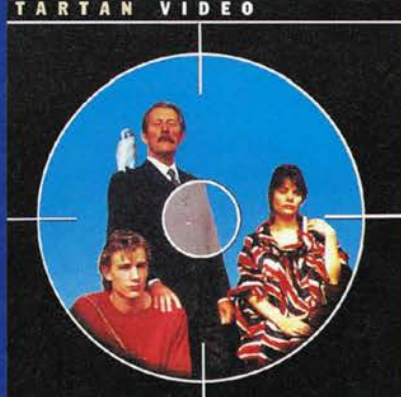
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# Resolutions

## Contributors to this issue

**Ronan Bennett's** writings include dramatic work for radio and television. He has recently completed a first feature film script for Stephen Rea

**Len Deighton's** most recent novel is *Faith*

**Candy Guard** is an animator whose work includes *Fatty Issues* and *Wishful Thinking*. She is currently working on *Pond Life*, an animated sitcom for Channel 4

**Steve Jenkins** programmes films for BBC Television

**Tom Dewe Matthews' Censored: The Story of Film Censorship** has been published recently

**Andy Medhurst** teaches film and media at University of Sussex

**Nick Roddick** has written widely on the business of film and is a former editor of *Moving Pictures*

**Gavin Smith's** work for *Sight and Sound* includes interviews with Michael Mann and, last month, Oliver Stone

**Amy Taubin** is a New York-based film-maker, curator and critic

**Jianying Zha** is a novelist and writer whose *China Pop*, her account of Chinese popular culture, is published this year

*Sight and Sound's* hopes for film in Britain in 1995 are:

● That decisions about film and video release are made not behind the closed doors of the BBFC, but openly. Since this is a vain hope, at least in the short term, we could perhaps wish instead that the BBFC will release a contentious title, precipitating a challenge to its authority. The consequence will be public argument and debate in an area notable for secrecy.

● That television will screen films that send the BBFC into a lather. Since Channel 4 has bought *Reservoir Dogs* and more recently *A Clockwork Orange* and the BBC has the rights to *Pulp Fiction* and *The Exorcist*, it would be easy for television to highlight the conservatism of the BBFC.

● That television during the Centenary of Cinema in 1995 has the courage to show non-English-language films before midnight.

● That the success of *Pulp Fiction* does not lead to a flood of films from British directors who believe that Tarantino has licensed them to tap into the cinematic or literary pulp tradition. *Pulp Fiction* is an ironic endnote to those traditions and knows it; it is a savage farce and looks like a "waxworks with a pulse", to quote from the script.

● That those committed to 'pulp' cinema recognise that the new source of pulp – meaning disposable, uncared-for material – is more likely to be television than print. If there is to be an exploitation cinema of the 90s, then *Baywatch* is likely to be its inspiration; if there is to be a new popular

cinema alert to the demands of history, one resource might be *Quantum Leap*.

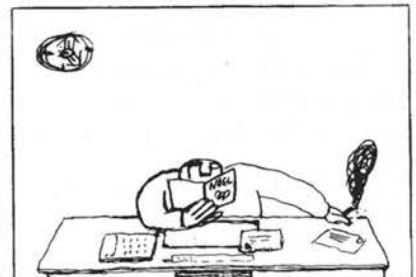
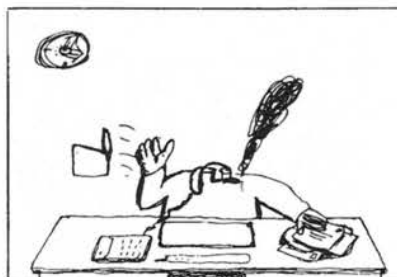
● That film critics in Britain (at last) recognise the centrality of television to cinema. It is not just that writers such as Jimmy McGovern and directors such as Antonia Bird (respectively, the writer and director of the forthcoming *Priest*) move from one medium to the other (they do not graduate from television to cinema). But the very forms of television can be a resource for cinema: see the situation comedy, Richard Curtis and *Four Weddings and a Funeral* (for all our reservations about the film itself).

● That video is seen as an ally of cinema and not its gravedigger. If the most interesting current cinema is Chinese and yet its visibility in Britain, particularly outside London, is patchy, then the remedy is to make it cheaply available on video. And this is not to mention the fact that interesting work – sometimes by valued directors such as Nicolas Roeg or Francesco Rosi – appears only on video. A decent culture would see the provision of good outlets for video as on a par with the provision of books through the library system.

● That 1995's celebrations of the Centenary of Cinema remind us that cinema has always enjoyed close relationships with other arts and technologies – whether fine art, theatre or television. With such a history, contemporary cinema should not become gloomy over new technologies, but find ways of working with them to reinvent the possibilities of the moving image.

## JERRY ON LINE #1

James Sillavan – Peter Lydon ©



'Jerry I'm worried. So far we've offered Robin director, cast, writer, and mineral water approval, he gets 10% of US gross, 30% of the Pacific Rim countries and I bet he's already got tinsel around the Matinee we sent over to soften him up, and yet still no Christmas card.'



# The business

● Those who made it all the way through *The Guardian's* recently-published extracts (there was more?) from Marlon Brando's autobiography may have read the following passage: "I don't know what happened to that Oscar. The Academy may have sent it to me, but if it did I don't know where it is now."

For those too young to remember or too sensible to care, "that Oscar" is the one involved in what may well be Hollywood's first recorded act of PC: Brando's refusal to accept the Best Actor Award for *The Godfather* in 1973 because of "the treatment of American Indians today by the film industry". These lines were delivered at the ceremony not by Brando but by one Sacheen Littlefeather (real name: Maria Cruz). So the statuette was put back on the shelf and, according to a version of events recently published in *The Hollywood Reporter*, "taken home" by someone else.

History – or those bits of it Mr Busy has been able to consult – doesn't record whether that is 'taken home' as in 'That's a nice bit of stuff, I'll have that', or 'taken home' as in 'Can't leave that lying around. Expect he'll want it in the morning anyway.'

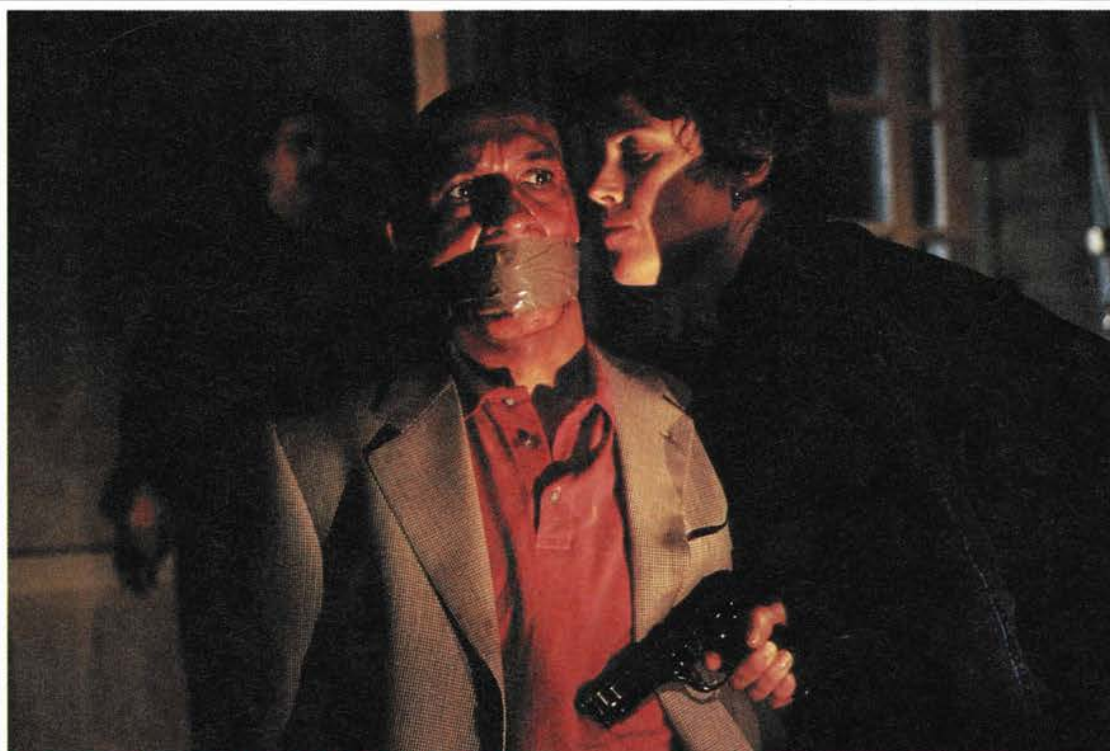
Whatever the reason, the statuette – which does not bear the Great Actor's name, since they are not inscribed until after the ceremony – supposedly re-emerged recently, though not into the full limelight. The person 'looking after it' for all these years, claimed someone to the *Reporter's* columnist Robert Osborne, would now like to auction it off, with half the proceeds going to charity (for noble reasons) and half to himself (because he's broke).

Not to be outdone on such a major issue, *Variety's* veteran columnist Army Archerd came up with his own version, courtesy of Karl Malden, president of the Academy at the time of the 1973 awards. The statuette, says Malden, was "taken home" by none other than Charles Chaplin, who was on hand to pick up the Best Musical Score award for *Limelight*.

It's not clear why the Academy bunged Charlie the one left over. Maybe to make up for a 20-year wait: Chaplin wrote the score in 1952, only to see *Limelight* banned in the US for 20 years because of its seditious Communist content (it tells the lachrymose story of an ageing music hall comedian nursing a young dancer back to health). Anyway, according to this version of events, the statuette is on a mantelpiece somewhere in Switzerland.

Brando's only recorded comment on the whole affair – with which, for once, it's hard not to agree – is: "I don't give a fuck."

**T**his past autumn saw the largely unheralded end to one of the most fruitful working relationships in European cinema: the



Ben Kingsley and Sigourney Weaver in Polanski's 'Death and the Maiden'

one between director Maurice Pialat and producer Daniel Toscan du Plantier. To date, the 20-year partnership has resulted in such films as 'Loulou', 'A nos amours', 'Police', 'Sous le soleil de Satan' and 'Van Gogh'. Renowned as one of the most demanding (read: difficult) film-makers in Europe, Pialat seemed to have found the ideal partner in the equally cantankerous Toscan du Plantier.

However, not even the notoriously free-spending CiBy 2000, which was to have put up the money for Pialat's upcoming 'Le Garçu', reckoned it could be done properly within the limits imposed by star Gérard Depardieu's overburdened timetable.

Toscan thus set up another (quite ingenious) structure, under which part of the budget (scale not yet announced) would come from Studio Canal +, with the rest raised from a guarantee against presales by PolyGram and UGC. Under this arrangement, Toscan would have co-produced 'Le Garçu' with the equally veteran Charles Gassot, whose recent credits include the 1994 French box-office hit 'La Cité de la peur, une comédie familiale'.

Pialat – who may have foreseen a too-many-cooks situation – opted instead for a film 100% financed by PolyGram and produced by that company's Philippe Godeau. Understandably miffed, Toscan was unusually restrained in his comments to 'Le Film français', saying however that, much as he loved Pialat, he "no longer felt able to take those kinds of risks".

● Footnote to the above: Readers may recall a short item in the August column about a spot of bother concerning the bills for the production of another Toscan du Plantier movie *Tous les jours dimanche* (Seven Sundays), partly shot in Florida last year.

When that same story ran in *Weekly Variety*, it provoked an outraged letter

from Toscan to the effect that the whole matter had been sorted out ages ago and arrangements were in place for all liabilities to be met. Mr Busy awaited the writ.

Well, surprise, surprise: when this year's annual Sarasota binge – otherwise known as The French Film Festival – rolled around in early November, plans were announced to screen the film. It turns out, however, that some of those pesky creditors still hadn't seen their money.

A number of swift transatlantic telephone calls later, a deal was made whereby the creditors would not block the screening in return for getting some money. How much is not clear, since the terms of the deal were that no creditor would reveal to another the nature of his or her settlement. Clever people, these French producers.

**S**peaking of transatlantic telephone calls, the recent flurry of activity surrounding the press junket for Roman Polanski's soon-to-be-released film version of 'Death and the Maiden', which stars Sigourney Weaver, Ben Kingsley and Stuart Wilson, has revealed an astounding fact: not all journalists are venal – not all the time, anyway.

I should explain that the press junket is an event set up by distribution companies to give journalists mass access to the director and stars of an about-to-be-released film, usually in Los Angeles. The method, so the theory goes, saves time and money, and makes it more likely that the stars will show, because they only have to do it once. Or twice if there's a New York junket as well.

The problem is, Polanski, who still has an arrest warrant waiting for him from the 1977 charge of sex with an underage girl, cannot

enter the United States. So Fine Line, who are opening the film in the US on Christmas Day, explored the possibility of flying the journalists to various parts of the Caribbean to meet up with Polanski. No dice, it seems.

The official reason was that most film journalists would be too busy in the run-up to Christmas. The real reason is that their editors wouldn't let them go, feeling they might be unduly influenced by all the sun-drenched hospitality.

Don't believe me? How else, then, do you explain the eventual solution – a junket held on an island off the coast of Nova Scotia, so cold and desolate that it is normally closed for the winter. No chance of anyone feeling guilty about that. I wonder how they persuaded Polanski to go, though.

● Oops time again. While I would not necessarily wish entirely to withdraw my confident predictions about the return of the swashbuckling movie, I feel I should point out that *Crimson Tide*, recently adduced by me in evidence of said trend, is in fact set in a submarine.

**H**ere's another snippet of information to Henrage Tory Eurosceptics and all those who believe that culture begins with Shakespeare and ends with Sid James: We may soon find ourselves the recipients of an Asterix mountain.

Despite much effort, the irascible little Gaul and his large companion Obelix have never really caught on here. In mainland Europe, however, they are big business.

Two years in the making, the latest and biggest animated Asterix movie, 'Asterix in America', a choice of story specifically designed to break the film stateside – opened in Germany in late September and has already earned over \$7 million at the box office there. The Germans have long since



taken over from the Belgians (who invented the character) as Europe's number one Asterix fans, and the latest film was wholly German-produced. But the French, in whose country the story is set, are now planning to muscle in on the act.

There is already a theme park devoted to the characters just north of Paris, which was supposed to have been annihilated by the opening of EuroDisney (oh yeah?). But now veteran director Claude Zidi and producer Claude Berri are lining up the first-ever (to my knowledge) live-action Asterix film. Daniel Auteuil will play the title character, and the film will be shot next spring in Brittany. And who, you ask, will play the large, belligerent Obelix? Yes, that's right, Gérard Depardieu. ● For all those readers who thought that *Speed* was pretty spiffing but that the end was rather silly, it may be some consolation to know that they

actually are building an underground railway under Los Angeles and, yes, a bit of it does come up in Hollywood. Or, to put it another way, Hollywood is dropping down to meet it.

The plan was to build a rapid-transit link from the San Fernando Valley to downtown Los Angeles (thereby reviving the spectre of the 'last train to San Fernando' beloved of 50s skiffle groups). This summer, however, the \$5.5 billion project hit a snag which makes the subsidence at Heathrow seem a mere ripple: a nine-block stretch of Hollywood Boulevard sank several inches in mid-August, and tunnelling was shut down. No sooner was it started again in November than damage was reported to the Pantages Theatre, the Roosevelt Hotel (where the first-ever Oscars were held) and

the sidewalk stars of John Forsythe, Carol Burnett, Eddie Albert and Fred MacMurray.

Even the famous hand- and footprints in the courtyard in front of Mann's (formerly Grauman's) Chinese Theatre have sunk by almost an inch. Those apparently at risk include Bette Davis, Lana Turner, Myrna Loy, Esther Williams and James Mason.

**A** recently completed medium-budget British movie reveals a hidden side to actor Jeff Rawle, who plays George in 'Drop the Dead Donkey'. Rawle is co-writer (with Benjamin Ross) of 'The Young Poisoner's Handbook', a fictionalised account of the case of Graham Young, a 60s schoolboy from Neasden who put his chemistry set to uses other than those recommended by the manufacturers, dispatching his stepmother, his uncle Jack and – after he was released as fully

rehabilitated – several of his workmates.

The film was shot on location in London this summer. Hugh O'Connor, best known as the young Christie Brown in 'My Left Foot' plays Graham.

● The big swing to the right in the recent US mid-term elections has thrust another ageing showbiz conservative nearer to the centre of power: Sonny Bono – who, must be well fed up by now with the qualifying identificatory rider "of Sonny and Cher".

Bono has in fact been the Mayor of right-wing Palm Springs – a community that wouldn't know a liberal if it ran over one in a Cadillac – for the past decade. He now goes to Washington as the congressman for the 44th District of California, which includes Palm Springs and which he won with an 18% margin.

A youth-platform Democrat at the famous '68 convention in Chicago, he has been moving right ever since, and will be 60 in February. Relations with his former singing partner may be deduced from his response to a journalist about plans to make a film out of his autobiography, *The Beat Goes On*. "I was going to let Tom Cruise play me," responded Bono, "and Roseanne could play Cher."

**F**ollowing their discovery of a gentler, more personal tone in the underappreciated 'Fiorile', the Taviani brothers are now to tackle Goethe. I have not, in the past, been a huge admirer of the dramatic works of the great German ('Faust Part II' has always seemed to me more contrived than any Peter Greenaway film). On the other hand, I have always been a fan of his mammoth epistolary novel, 'Die Wahlverwandtschaften' (usually translated as 'Elective Affinities'), which is a kind of 'Les Liaisons dangereuses' without the sex.

The novel was recently adapted very successfully for the stage in Italy, but it is not known whether the Tavianis – whose film will be produced next year by RAI Television – will make this the basis for their film.

The Tavianis' 'Fiorile'

## LONDON NOTES

### Strictly classified

In Britain, unlike most countries, it is almost impossible to find out what has been censored from films. It is therefore with a sense of anticipation, but also weariness, that followers of censorship trends and debates await the publication of the British Board of Film Classification's Annual Reports – anticipation because this is one of the few sources of official information in the field, and weariness because that information has to be analysed with the retentiveness of a cold war Kremlinologist. In the latter sense, at least, the BBFC's 1993 report lives up to expectations.

This is partly because it is much thinner than in previous years, which in itself is surprising, since the present moral panic, and consequent demand from newspapers that the BBFC increase its workload, has been gathering momentum since the murder of James Bulger in February 1993. The explanation, for both the disparity in length and the report's late arrival, might perhaps lie with the Home Office, where it has been held up since August 1994. Unfortunately, as with most of Britain's film censorship, the question of whether this report has itself been a subject of censorship is impossible to verify, since the Home Office refuses to answer any requests for information on film censorship.

Yet the report's tardiness might also explain why its writers seem to have a somewhat flexible sense of time. The very first sentence states, "The Board began the year 1993 with a programme of voluntary redundancies"; in fact, on 26 November of that year the BBFC terminated the contracts of three



examiners and did not renew the contracts of ten others. And as the report begins, so it continues. "For the first time in more than 20 years," the Board claims, "examiners were to be full-time, involved not just in the day to day examining of films and videos, but in a programme of research into public needs and concerns through an ambitious outreach programme." But the new examiners began not in 1993 but in August 1994, and as for the "ambitious outreach programme", in practice this involves the BBFC's new recruits being sent out to video shops in the rougher corners of London where they mostly stand around watching customers come and go. These timewarps, though, are not trivial errors in chronology. They have more serious implications. They help give the impression that the board was making its own decisions rather than, as appears to be the case, reacting to external pressures.

In common with so many audits from bureaucratic institutions that are under political fire, this report is more interesting for what it does not say than for what it does. In that same first paragraph, for instance, we are told that examiners are now moving "from classification into the field of consumer advice, providing information on video packaging and cassette labels." Yet far from happening in 1993, this "move" did not start until October 1994. This is in fact a move recommended to the BBFC's director, James Ferman, for the last six years by his former examiners. (The appearance of consumer advice on video labels might have pre-empted the Alton amendment – had it been introduced in 1993.)

The confusions continue – even in the first paragraph. Yet those who look to this report to find out why such celebrated films as *Reservoir Dogs* and *Bad Lieutenant* have not been given a video certificate will have to look elsewhere. Here we are told that this 'ban' occurred initially "because of concern about underage viewing" when, in fact, the two films were initially passed uncut both on film and video by the examiners. After that, when various newspapers highlighted the films' violence, Ferman halted their official video certification, because, as he put it, "They simply happened to be around."

Fortunately both of these films are at last about to be passed on video. Whether they are passed intact will be the best indication of whether the Criminal Justice Act has begun to change the censorship climate and whether the BBFC retains its integrity. Tom Dewe Mathews





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## Why have recent films been so awash with gore? And why are movie vampires suddenly on the loose again? By Amy Taubin

● Every cinephile has her/his own litany of blood movies. A mere mention of certain titles summons up the image of red; spurting, gushing, suffusing the screen. Pulsing veins, severed limbs, flayed bodies float before the mind's eye. It's our visceral response to such images that fixes them in memory. But even the most intensely visceral images fade unless they also embody other kinds of meaning. Not that there isn't guilty pleasure in gore for its own sake. I thrilled at the moment in the otherwise anaemic *Interview with the Vampire: The Vampire Chronicles* when Tom Cruise squeezed the blood from a rat's body into a wine glass and offered it to a revolted Brad Pitt; six months from now, I will probably have forgotten it entirely.

For the record, my own list of blood movies includes *The Red Shoes* (1948), *Window, Water, Baby Moving* (1959), the Zapruder footage of JFK's assassination (1963), *Weekend* (1967), *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967), *The Wild Bunch* (1969), *The Act of Seeing with One's Own Eyes* (1971), *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1974), *Taxi Driver* (1976), *Carrie* (1976), *Alien* (1979), *The Shining* (1980) and *Scanners* (1980). It is perhaps worth mentioning that both *Taxi Driver* and the Zapruder footage were recently added to the list of films designated by the National Registry of the Library of Congress as "historically and culturally significant and

worthy of preservation". Only 150 films have been chosen in the six years the Film Registry has been in operation.

My choices are obviously conditioned by my personal history and reflect my politics, my aesthetic sensibility and my psycho-sexual predilections. If I had been an adult when I saw *The Red Shoes*, I might not have been transfixed by the sight of Moira Shearer's white tights stained with red (which doesn't mean I think the film should be off-limits for children). *Weekend*, *Bonnie and Clyde* and *The Wild Bunch* all spoke to the violence in Vietnam; the red which dappled the movie screen was what was missing from the nightly news, as transmitted to black and white TVs. The body horror of *Carrie*, *Alien* and even *Scanners* emerged from a patriarchy shaken up about feminism and gender. *The Shining* was Kubrick's distillation of the horror film, the happening genre of the 70s which continued to reign in the home-video market of the 80s and 90s. The blood that washes from the elevator in *The Shining* is a terrifying metaphor for nuclear-family violence, Kubrick's misogynist subtext notwithstanding.

*Taxi Driver* is the most prescient of these films, not only because it made violence, rather than sex, an art-house hook, but also because it defines psychosis as the condition of relating to the world as if it were a movie. The windshield of Travis' cab is his camera lens; through it, he sees, framed and at a distance, "[a]ll the animals [that] come out at night: whores, skunk pussies, buggers, queens, fairies, dopers, junkies, sick, venal". At the climax of the film, when he ►

Undead languor: Tom Cruise's desiccated Lestat in 'Interview with the Vampire: The Vampire Chronicles'

# BLOODY TALES







**Lyrical anxieties:  
vampires in the East Village  
in Michael Almereyda's  
'Nadja', below, and vampires  
in academe in Abel Ferrara's  
'The Addiction', right**

◀ leaves the cab, armed to the teeth, on an insane mission of rescue and revenge, he walks into a movie of his own making, complete with spinning overhead shots, blasted bodies and buckets of blood.

From *Taxi Driver*, it's a short step to the 90s self-referentiality of Quentin Tarantino's *Reservoir Dogs* and *Pulp Fiction*. Tarantino's aestheticising of violence is a version of Warholian cool in which an image of splattered brains is an image of splattered brains. Tarantino's films are interesting not for what they have to say about the construction of masculinity, or for what they refuse to admit about race relations, but for the way they force their audiences to confront the sado-masochistic pleasure they derive from images of violence. In *Reservoir Dogs*, our position mirrors that of the hapless cop; like him, we're tied to our seats, mesmerised by the homicidal menace of the dancing Mr Blonde. In *Pulp Fiction* we're exhilarated by the power of the movies to reverse time – thereby triumphing over death – so that the loveable gangster who's blown away half way through the film is resurrected to dance across the screen at the final fade.

Tarantino's aesthetics of cool are the post-modern twist on (some would say a parody of) the modernist version of aesthetic distance. In *Pulp Fiction*, when we find ourselves gasping at the sight of a needle poised to penetrate a woman's heart, we re-establish our cool by laughing at ourselves for reacting as if the image were real. On the other hand, when Stan Brakhage fretted, during the editing of *Window, Water, Baby Moving*, about whether an image of the placenta plopping out of his wife's vagina would cause an irreparable breach of aesthetic distance, he was acknowledging the realist potential of the photographic image that Tarantino is desperate to deny. Brakhage's *Window, Water, Baby Moving* and *The Act of Seeing with One's Own Eyes* are among the greatest of blood movies because they are simultaneously meditations on the body and on its representation. (The politics of Brakhage's films, on the other hand, leaves something to be desired – witness his facile assumption, in *Window, Water, Baby Moving*, of his wife's labours as his own.)

## Bloodstream and mainstream

The reader may have noted that the most recent film on my list was released in 1980. Frankly, I'm not sure if, at that point, I simply lost my taste for cinematic blood or if movies themselves became less visceral as they became more violent. Or perhaps the proliferation of schlock horror has had a desensitising effect. In video stores, blood is cheap. And while such directors as De Palma, Kubrick and Oliver Stone never lost interest in showing bodies that bleed, the images seemed exhausted.

By the late 80s, however, the Aids crisis had given blood a new meaning. *Near Dark*, *Alien<sup>3</sup>*,



*Bram Stoker's Dracula*, *Wolf* and *Interview with the Vampire* are all metaphoric Aids-anxiety movies. Blood functions in their various narratives as the medium for a network of contamination. It means death from without, even as it circulates within living bodies.

Along with souped-up blood imagery, a wide array of sado-masochistic discourses and practices has made its way into the mainstream. Pierced and scarified bodies have surfaced as fashion statements in shopping malls and high schools across America. S&M clubs are said to be for the 90s what swinging-singles retreats were for the 60s. The most successful US television drama series of autumn 1994 is Michael Crichton's *E.R.*, set in the casualty department of a big-city hospital and featuring a non-stop stream of profusely bleeding trauma victims, as well as patients suffering from a wide range of minor and major ailments and psychiatric disorders. In general, *E.R.* speaks to American anxiety about healthcare (aggravated by the Clinton healthcare-reform debacle). But the image of doctors and nurses sheathed in latex to protect them from contact with potentially deadly fluids brings the Aids crisis home to even the most naive couch potatoes.

Blood made the headlines in the art world as well. Even before the election that gave them a congressional majority, right-wing conservatives launched a renewed attack on the National Endowment for the Arts for indirectly funding (with a lavish \$150) a performance art event at the Walker Art Center in which artist Ron Athey used a scalpel to carve a design on the back of fellow performer Darryl Carlton, blotted the blood with paper towels and then hung the towels on a line that stretched across the audience. Athey is HIV positive; Carlton is not. Athey followed safety procedures, wearing latex gloves and using disposable instruments. Nevertheless, one audience member complained to the state health board that he had been subjected to the risk of HIV infection, the story was whipped up in the press to epic proportions by the Christian right, and Con-

gress punished the NEA by reducing its budget by several million dollars.

With the victory of the republicans, the discourse of S&M – and, more specifically, of vampirism – dominates the political landscape. The triumphant right wing immediately proclaimed that the time had come to discipline all those welfare mothers and their children who have drained the economy and corrupted family values. Vampirism is as apt a metaphor for the power relations within an increasingly desperate capitalism and the not unrelated culture of victimisation as it is for 'Tainted Love' in the age of Aids. Vampirism involves a symbiotic relationship of unequal power in which the powerful (the vampire) projects its own guilt (for being inhuman, undead, evil, corrupt, murderous, or whatever) on to its powerless victim, blaming the victim for being complicit in his or her own destruction (since the victim is now evil, less than human, corrupt and so on). Moreover, the vampire regards the victim as a drain on its own energy since the victim's blood is never sufficient to slake its thirst.

## Blood buddies

If Neil Jordan is aware of these dynamics, he certainly doesn't allow them to surface in his film adaptation of Anne Rice's best-selling novel. Nor does he incorporate what is most compelling in Rice's text. Published in 1976, *Interview with the Vampire* is the first of the author's supernatural pot-boilers. (Rice has also written several pornographic novels; published under a pseudonym, they take a less veiled approach to the pleasures of S&M.) Written nearly a decade before Aids was identified – although the HIV virus was already, secretly, on the move – the novel was inspired by her intimate knowledge of another disease of the blood. Her daughter had died of leukaemia at the age of five. Rice's *Interview with the Vampire* is haunted by the image of the mother/child dyad and by the mother's feelings of guilt, rage, loss, and powerlessness, in not being able to give her child eternal life.

The Hollywood version of *Interview with the Vampire* is an inert, heavily atmospheric costume drama, devoid of eroticism, emotion and ideas. Although the narrative is framed in the first person (Louis, the 200-year-old reluctant vampire tells his story to a magazine writer whom he picks up in a San Francisco back alley), the film lacks any sense of subjectivity. And what use is a vampire film that never lets you see through undead eyes?

Brad Pitt as the petulant Louis and Tom Cruise as the desiccated Lestat give callow though enthusiastic performances. Both actors are encumbered by make-up (chalky white powder, a tracing of blue veins) that deprives them of the charm of their good looks without transforming them into creatures capable of inspiring awe or terror. One longs for the slow-burn seduction of John Malkovich in *Dangerous*

ANTHONY CARONIA



*Liaisons* or, more to the point, of Gary Oldman in *Bram Stoker's Dracula*. Lacking such charismatic performers, *Interview with the Vampire* quickly deteriorates into a series of barely animated tableaux in which one or other of the vampires cosies up to his victim, rattles off a few lines of dialogue and wham-bam goes for the jugular.

The film is erratically edited, either because of the need to cut around the performances or because the powers-that-be couldn't figure out how much languor they could afford in a product aimed at the mass market. Or perhaps the overall shapelessness signals a failure to come to terms with the film's blatant, though not necessarily intentional, contradictions. But if *Interview with the Vampire* is dull to watch, it's not uninteresting to mull over as a cultural object. In the matter of the mainstreaming of blood, there's probably as much red stuff drunk and spilt in Jordan's film as there is filling the elevator room in *The Shining* – though Jordan's imagery is more about gross-out than grandeur.

In fact, the fetishising of blood functions as a shield, distracting attention from the film's greater though only partially realised transgression. *Interview with the Vampire* is the story of an exceedingly longtime companionship, of a marriage between two men which begins in the heat of passion (when Lestat first sinks his teeth into Louis' neck, they fly heavenward locked in each other's arms) and which then settles into a daily routine of naggings, recriminations and betrayals without ever losing its symbiotic pull. Furthermore, these homosexuals – who are played by one major star and one stud-like

upcomer – are the only characters in the film with whom the audience can identify.

But the film could hardly be said to embrace homosexuality. Except in their initial moment of contact, Louis and Lestat seem devoid of all sexual desire. The homoeroticism implicit in the narrative is totally repressed on the screen. And don't forget, these are a couple of vampires – meaning they're evil perverts who carry the plague in their tainted blood. So are they supposed to be good guys or bad guys?

## Femmes with fangs

The film's evasiveness leaves the audience high and dry – and word of mouth has been mixed. *Interview with the Vampire* took \$36.4 million in its opening weekend, which placed it fifth on *Variety's* list of all-time biggest openings. The following weekend, however, the gross dropped by over 50 per cent, the third weekend being even worse. The film is now expected to gross no more than \$110 million in the US. However, although such lukewarm business may put paid to plans for a sequel, Hollywood is hardly lacking for other blood-sucker projects.

While *Interview with the Vampire* drowned its metaphors in blood, two independently produced vampire films, both scheduled for 1995 release, allow their subtexts to flow by keeping gore to a minimum. Pulp-meister Abel Ferrara is currently editing *The Addiction*, which stars Lili Taylor as a New York University doctoral candidate who vampirises an entire philosophy department plus a few downtowners without advanced degrees. Michael Almereyda's lyrical

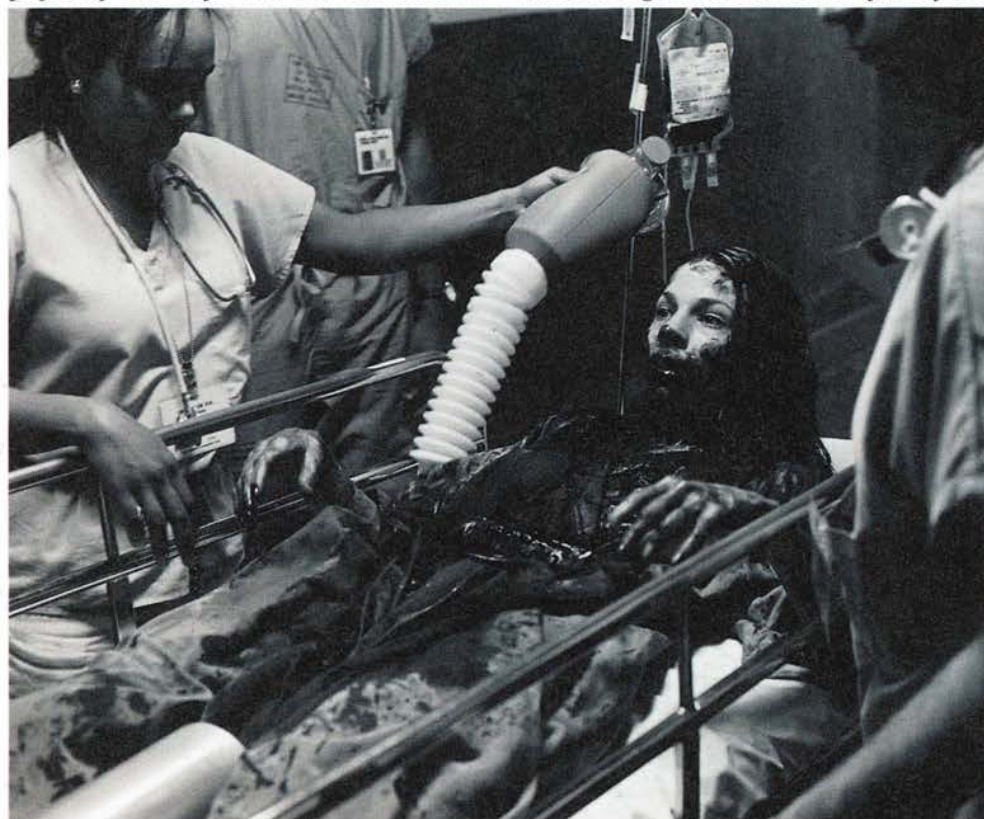
*Nadja*, executive-produced by David Lynch, stars Elina Lowensohn as Dracula's daughter, an exotic interloper who wreaks havoc in the East Village scene. Both films can be read as Aids-anxiety fantasies constructed from a male heterosexual position, with the vampire as a *femme fatale* who lures both men and women to their doom. Emulating Hitchcock's restraint in making *Psycho*, both film-makers shot in black and white, with the result that blood is abstracted, suggesting a state of mind rather than body. Nevertheless, the two films could not be more dissimilar in visual and narrative style.

Almereyda combines Pixelvision video with richly detailed 35 mm, shooting the East Village as if it were the Paris of the Surrealists (he takes inspiration as much from Breton's *Nadja* as Dreyer's *Vampyr*). The Pixelvision image, simultaneously sharp-edged and soft-focused, suggests the vampire point of view. When the film cuts from 35 mm to Pixelvision, it's as if the world were sliced open and we see from the inside out. The vampire's presence destabilises time, space, desire. Marriages dissolve, bloodlines are severed. Dracula's daughter seduces Lucy on the floor of the railroad flat where she lives with her husband. Later, in the midst of chaos, Lucy plaintively asks: "Maybe we should have a baby." That murderous stranger who we recklessly invite in for the night, the vampire is also a *doppelgänger* who kills from within.

*The Addiction* (which I've seen only in rough cut) is one of Ferrara's twisted genre-combinations. It could be a sequel to his rape-revenge thriller *Ms .45* or a companion piece to the sordid but inescapably moral *Bad Lieutenant*. In *The Addiction*, Aids is not a metaphor but a fact of life, the environment in which addiction flourishes; and the febrile, tensile-strengthened Lili Taylor is high not only on blood but also on junk, power, knowledge, seduction, and on evil itself. Unlike *Interview with the Vampire*, which pays only lip service to its first-person narration, *The Addiction* presents the vampire's as the only subjectivity. "Tell me to leave you alone. Tell me with authority," says the vampire to her victim, but she might as well be talking to us. If we don't withdraw we risk becoming complicit with her point of view. And if we don't quite grasp the seriousness of the situation – how close we are to being dominated, possessed even, by 'the other' – it's because Ferrara is expert at using parody to keep us off guard. After all, who could fall for a vampire who mangles her Husserl with her Nietzsche?

For all its blood-letting, *Interview with the Vampire* keeps the undead at a safe distance, removed to a faux nineteenth century and sheathed in big-budget respectability. *Nadja* and *The Addiction* let us know that vampires are here and they are us.

*Interview with the Vampire: The Vampire Chronicles* opens on 20 January and will be reviewed in the February issue





EXIT



ANDIE MACDOWELL

Mr. *Weddings*  
and a *funeral*

15

**FUNNY**  
WITH LAUGHING  
EXPRESS

HA/HA/HA/HA

BANK

POP CORN  
HIGH BROW  
NEWS

HEATH



**'Four Weddings and a Funeral' has had unprecedented success worldwide. Nick Roddick interprets the box office and considers the implications**

● Nearly ten years ago, in Australia, I saw the first preview of *Crocodile Dundee* and experienced the phenomenon of an audience falling in love with a film as it unspools in front of them. I had often before sat in packed houses full of laughing and sometimes cheering moviegoers. But this was different. *Crocodile Dundee* was a film the audience was not prepared for: no reviews, TV clips, poster campaigns or word of mouth. This was love at first sight.

Researching the extraordinary worldwide success of *Four Weddings and a Funeral* over the past few weeks, I have heard many film distributors tell me similar stories – of how they (and subsequently their audiences) fell in love with what is by now, in box office terms, the most successful British film of all time. The early bouquets came from, of all places, Australia. Distributor Richard Sheffield-MacClure of REP Distribution was the film's first foreign buyer and was so excited by the screenplay that he could hardly wait for the time difference to allow him to phone PolyGram in London to make an offer. In Belgium, distributor Jan Verheyen of the Independent Group received a print before the US opening – which is where *Four Weddings* was first established as a *bona fide* box-office hit – and recalls laughing so much during his first viewing that he missed whole chunks of the plot.

Of course, neither of them would have told me this if the film had bombed, and it is tempting to put the whole *Four Weddings* phenomenon down to serendipity – to claim that the almost universal love affair with the film is one of those inexplicable blips in the graph of public taste: the sort of thing that has, in the past, given us *Neighbours* and *New Kids on the Block*. But I have never been much convinced by William Goldman's famous dictum that, in the film business, nobody knows anything: Steven Spielberg, for one, has always seemed to me to know a thing or two. More to the point, most of the evidence suggests that those involved in the

distribution of *Four Weddings and a Funeral* realised very quickly what they had and handled it accordingly. It was a strongly marketed film almost everywhere, and you have to be confident about a film's appeal to commit major resources to it, especially when it is a British comedy with second-eleven stars (as they then largely were).

So what was it everyone saw? At the outset, of course, it was just another screenplay for another British film, written by Richard Curtis, co-writer of *Not the Nine O'Clock News* and *Blackadder*, writer of *Mr Bean*, *The Tall Guy* and the new Dawn French sitcom *The Vicar of Dibley*. Nor did *Four Weddings* dance joyfully and joke-packed on to the page: Curtis worked with director Mike Newell for over a year on the script, taking it through 20 drafts to inject what Newell (in all the film's production notes) calls enough "emotional support" for all the comedy. Produced by Duncan Kenworthy – who took time off from his regular job with Jim Henson Productions to do so – *Four Weddings* was made by Working Title Films, one of the more dynamic young production companies to emerge in the 80s, with credits that include *My Beautiful Laundrette*, *Wish You Were Here* and *A World Apart*. Unfortunately, few of Working Title's recent films – among them the *Robin Hood* that didn't have Kevin Costner – have turned a profit, and in 1992 the company became part of PolyGram, the giant international record conglomerate.

At that moment, PolyGram was in the process of being launched on a course of rapid diversification into the audio-visual business by its dynamic French boss Alain Lévy. And the start of the international sales push on *Four Weddings* in spring 1993 coincided with that expansion. This probably gave the film a higher profile than might have been expected for a British romantic comedy without, at that stage, a cast (not announced until July) and with a very modest budget (£2.9 million, 70 per cent from PolyGram, 30 per cent from Channel 4). ►

# FOUR WEDDINGS AND A FINAL RECKONING

ILLUSTRATION BY MICHAEL HEATH



◀ For Sheffield-MacClure, who bought the film under just those circumstances, "the mere title was special. It was an extremely clever, well-written, humorous script. My only concern was the character of Charles [eventually played by Hugh Grant]. If cast wrong, he could destroy the whole picture. It had to be someone who could get away with how he treats women. It had to be someone who was vulnerable as well as charming." Sheffield-MacClure thinks PolyGram didn't quite know what it had. After all, sales agents have to (pretend to) love every film they handle, and PolyGram at that stage had a slate of 16 titles on its books. Distributors, on the other hand, only buy the films they like – or the ones they think they can make money out of.

While big Hollywood films are distributed throughout the world by companies affiliated with or owned by the likes of Warner Bros, 20th Century Fox, Disney, Columbia, Universal, Paramount and MGM, smaller, independently produced films will be traded like any other commodity. The trading takes place three times a year: at the American Film Market, held in Los Angeles in February; at Cannes in May (where the buying and selling of films far outstrips the festival proper in commercial significance); and at MIFED, the October market, which takes place in Milan. At the markets, buyers (film distributors from various countries) agree to pay a sum of money for the theatrical (cinema) rights to a film in their territory, often picking up the television and video rights as well. At any given moment, around half the films playing in any country's capital and perhaps 30 per cent of those playing in the provinces will have reached the screen in this way. It is a billion-dollar business.

#### Global appeal

To some extent, PolyGram's expansion had put it on the fringes of this process, in that it is equipped to distribute the film itself in certain countries – in the Netherlands, for instance, where Meteor Film is a PolyGram subsidiary and in France, where *Four Weddings* was released by the PolyGram-owned Pan-Européenne. But mostly, the film was sold much as any other independent movie is. A lot of the sales were done at script stage in Cannes in May 1993, with most of the rest mopped up at MIFED in October, by which time a promo reel showing edited scenes from the film was available. The film's first full screening for buyers was at the American Film Market in February 1994, where the last remaining territories were closed.

What this makes clear is that the appeal of *Four Weddings* was obvious to professional distributors long before it was publicly screened (it didn't open in North America until 9 March 1994, a week after the end of the AFM). "We bought it at Cannes in 1993 as part of a package," says Jan Verheyen, "but we didn't realise its potential until we screened it. Then we said: 'This is going to be our *Sleepless in Seattle*.'" "I went into the preview with enormous expectations," says Sheffield-MacClure. "They were delivered tenfold."

Once the film opened the multiples turned out to be a lot more than ten. The chart opposite gives some idea of the extraordinary success of

*Four Weddings and a Funeral* in almost every country (at time of writing, it had still to open in Hungary, Lebanon, the Philippines and parts of Latin America). But readers may need a little help in putting the figures into perspective.

Certainly *Four Weddings* is no *Jurassic Park*, which took upwards of \$840 million worldwide (though in France, where the British comedy is still running, its admission figures are already 80 per cent of those for the dinosaur blockbuster). But with a worldwide gross that should go beyond \$250 million, *Four Weddings* is nonetheless a massive hit, not just relatively, for a British film, but absolutely – somewhere on a par with *Cliffhanger* and *Indecent Proposal*, which had budgets between ten and 20 times its size. In the UK, where it has so far taken \$44,663,362, it already ranks as the second most successful release among films for all time. And it has even been a sizeable hit in the US, where its box-office gross of \$52.6 million would, in 1993 terms, put it in the bottom half of the annual top 20. But the truly remarkable thing about *Four Weddings* has been the geographical broadness of its appeal.

Since I can recall no British film ever passing the \$200 million mark at the box office, it is hard to generalise about the international earnings of British movies at this end of the scale. But in the case of American movies, the balance between the money taken in North America and that earned in the rest of the world averages at around 55 per cent for the rest of the world and 45 per cent for North America. For *Four Weddings*, the ratio is currently 78/22 in favour of the rest of the world (on which, moreover, the book is still very much open). In that respect, too, the film is a phenomenon.

Of course, success breeds success, and nowhere more so than in the movie business, where the process is usually referred to as 'word of mouth'. The better a movie opens, the more people there are to recommend it to their friends. This had always been the case, but has become more so over the past decade, as distribution patterns have changed. Exclusive runs in the big cities followed by a wider release in the



From vaguely bankable to bankably vague: Hugh Grant

suburbs and elsewhere have generally been replaced by a single, massive burst of release publicity: ads, press interviews, TV talk-show appearances and so on. Generally speaking, in North America, a hit movie will take between 15 per cent (*In the Line of Fire*) and 25 per cent (*Cliffhanger*) of its total gross in its first weekend. For a flop, this figure can hit 80 per cent or even 90 per cent because, for flops, there are no second weekends.

But in North America *Four Weddings* did the opposite. After a limited two-screen opening, it was on five screens by its second week and taking \$201,552, with a per-screen average – the most reliable guide to the effectiveness of a film's performance – of \$40,000, four times the figure for all but one of the week's other films. In the following weeks, screens and box office rose dramatically. By week five, the number of screens had risen to 240 and the box-office take was \$2,881,513. By week seven (15-21 April), Newell's comedy was the number one film in America – the first British film in six years to occupy the top slot – with a seven-day gross of \$5,627,213 from 721 screens.

#### Feelgood triumph

The international career of *Four Weddings and a Funeral* followed a slightly different pattern, if only because by the time it opened in its first non-US territory (France), it was already a phenomenon and so tended to open wider than in the US. But it demonstrated the same staying power, even during Europe's hottest June and July for many years. At its peak in the UK and France, *Four Weddings* was playing on up to 400 screens. In Germany, where it opened with a modest 130, it peaked at 450 screens, easily outgrossing the Arnold Schwarzenegger vehicle *True Lies* in the process. "In France," says Gilles Marie Tiné of distributor Pan-Européenne, "it did not have a normal career at all. All through the summer months, it went down only slightly at the release of each subsequent 'big' film. It became the film of the summer and is still (22 November) showing on 83 screens." In late November it overtook *Mrs Doubtfire* to become France's top-grossing film of the year.

In Australia *Four Weddings* opened on 120 screens (a huge number by Australian standards), rising to 134 at its peak. It took \$1.6 million in its first week, four times the gross of the number two film, *Ace Ventura Pet Detective*, another surprise hit which had opened only the week before. It is now one of the country's top ten films of all time.

In Belgium, Verheyen points out, Independent opened it to coincide with the start of the school and college holidays on 22 June. "We wanted it to be the film to see for all the students," he says. "In the preceding weeks, as we saw the degree of awareness among exhibitors [cinema owners], we gradually increased the print-and-advertising budget. After France, we decided to go for broke and opened it with 35 prints, which you would normally only do for a mainstream blockbuster in Belgium. Even now [21 November], in its twenty-second week, it is still playing in ten theatres. Obviously, when it arrived, it already had the aura of a phenomenon. But I'm still convinced it would



# 'FOUR WEDDINGS AND A FUNERAL'

Box-office gross by country (in order of opening date)

Country	Release date	Number of first-run screens still playing	Total box office to date
US	9 March	–	52,584,880
France	27 April	83	34,529,345
Switzerland*	29 April	14	4,947,472
Australia	5 May	–	15,663,969
UK	13 May	30	44,663,362
New Zealand	10 June	4	2,273,562
Singapore	16 June	–	839,508
Belgium	22 June	10	3,481,090
Brazil	6 July	–	3,416,455
South Korea	16 July	–	1,690,515
Taiwan	16 July	–	928,604
Austria	4 August	9	2,798,529
Germany	4 August	171	28,496,193
Denmark	5 August	18	2,456,116
Iceland	5 August	1	318,276
Norway	5 August	8	2,587,278
Hong Kong	25 August	2	1,448,490
Argentina	26 August	–	1,021,955
Spain	26 August	50	8,326,708
Israel	27 August	10	1,141,760
Poland	2 September	15	584,044
South Africa	2 September	25	1,499,416
Sweden	9 September	58	5,373,915
Turkey	16 September	2	163,899
Finland	30 September	8	491,695
Czech Republic	7 October	8	17,515
Japan	8 October	40	3,929,768
Italy	13 October	76	3,592,361
Slovenia/Croatia	20 October	7	172,040
Greece	4 November	8	293,988
Mexico	4 November	36	401,209
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>234,389,467</b>

All figures \$US. Source: PolyGram Film International. Compiled on 15 November 1994

\* 'Four Weddings' opened in French-speaking Switzerland on 29 April and in German-speaking Switzerland on 10 June. The total is for both markets

have been a hit even if we had opened it before the US."

Why? Well, for a start, Verheyen's conviction notwithstanding, it *had* been a hit in the US, and the film's performance there (and to a lesser extent in France and Australia) encouraged distributors to commit more to its promotion than they would otherwise have done, breaking the deadly 'no marketing/no audience' cycle which sinks most British films before they have even left the slipway. But something kept drawing people: what was it? "If we knew that," jokes Verheyen, "we'd be called Universal Pictures, not Independent Films." Most of those whose year has been financially brightened by the film ascribed its success to three factors: the script, the demographics ("At the beginning," says Tiné, "it was the classic audience, 17-24, then it spread to a younger group and finally to all ages, 10-60") and the overall tone.

Hugh Grant also helped – though he started the summer vaguely bankable, he ended it a star. But one explanation that crops up in almost every conversation involves that mid-

90s buzzword 'feelgood'. "Four Weddings is the ultimate feelgood movie," say both Sheffield-MacClure and Verheyen, each one unconsciously echoing the other from their opposite sides of the world.

In Britain, not everybody felt good about it. Much as happened with *Crocodile Dundee* in Australia, there was a predictable 'tall-poppy' reaction. If it's that successful, the assumption was, it can't that good, and with a box-office total of \$234 million it *certainly* can't be British.

The most common cause for complaint has been that it portrays a tourist's-eye view of Britain. *Four Weddings* certainly exports a view of British life which is much more like the rest of the world *wants* it to be than it actually is – a strategy which has worked very well for Merchant-Ivory over the past decade.

But *Four Weddings* is worlds apart from the earnest tableaux of *Howards End* and *The Remains of the Day*: it is a comedy, extrapolated from contemporary social reality but no less grounded in it than, say, *It Happened One Night*. Curtis' observation of social details within this con-

sciously artificial structure is acute. You have to know the British upper-middle class pretty well before you send them off to a smart wedding in a battered Land Rover.

By the same token, if there was an Oscar for location scouts, it would have to go to whoever lined up the various key setting for *Four Weddings*, which are as exactly right as location can be (with the possible exception of the funeral setting, which is a little *too* careful). My own particular prize goes to the 'Boatman' hotel (actually The Crown in Amersham) where Charles and Carrie first sleep together.

Such things should not be made light of, least of all when you consider how much they have contributed to the effect of other countries' films in the past – *Celine et Julie vont en bateau*; *Paris, Texas*; *Betty Blue* – and how often we in Britain have tended to disregard them. Remember *Buster*?

Some of the film's appeal has to do with the broad range of characters – "one for everyone in a group of friends, a bit like *The Big Chill*," claims PolyGram's Xavier Marchand. But above all it is also from moment to moment the best-timed British movie since the heyday of Bill Forsyth. And, if the pace does slacken a little towards the end – after John Hannah's *tour de force* funeral oration – that has more to do with the rules of romantic comedy than with any shortcoming in Curtis' script or Newell's direction.

## Futures for all

So what are the implications of all this? In the short term, for anyone in the film business, they are pretty horrendous: for 12 months or so, literally hundreds of half-completed films and even half-written scripts will be pitched as "this year's *Four Weddings and a Funeral*", probably on grounds no more solid than having a scene with a sheep in them. In the medium term, the film's success will make it a bit easier to raise money for – and much easier to sell – British-made comedies. For Mike Newell, after nearly 20 years in the business, it has meant a Disney-backed production company with a sizeable development fund and the power to greenlight films with budgets of up to \$12 million (nearly three times the cost of *Four Weddings*).

For Hugh Grant it has brought stardom – this past summer he was Hollywood's hottest property ("Could he," action producer Joel Silver was inquiring, "carry a gun?") – though no particular wealth. He will reportedly make less than any of the other key people involved. Indeed, the only person (as opposed to company) expected to grow noticeably richer as a result of making the movie is Andie MacDowell, who agreed to play the role of Carrie for only \$250,000 (a quarter of her usual asking price) in return for a series of box-office-related bonuses which should bring her around \$3 million.

Above all, though, *Four Weddings*' success is the kind that everyone in the film business dreams of: it is the movie that recoups all past losses (which is what it has done for Working Title); it is the periodic boost without which film-making in Britain would cease completely; and it is the sort of film which justifies the pretence – generally no more than semantic habit in Britain – that film is a popular art-form.



# THE BBC 100

**As a flagship to its celebrations for the Centenary of Cinema, BBC2 will televise 100 films throughout the year, starting with 'Citizen Kane' on 2 January 1995. Sight and Sound asked some of the films' makers to reflect on the list. And on page 23, Andy Medhurst celebrates the joy of watching films on television**

**Steve Jenkins, BBC2 film programmer, explains how the BBC 100 was selected**

In cinema's centenary year, it is ironic that most people's access to film history now comes through television, a medium once seen as a threat to cinema's existence. The BBC provides an ongoing repertory programme of films, selected from a library of over 3,500 features held under license. But increasingly television uses these films as an audio-visual aid: accompanying documentaries, for thematic significance or to celebrate anniversaries. Anything 'old' or 'foreign' is pushed to the scheduling margins. The pleasure of watching classic films is becoming surprisingly elusive.

The purpose of this list of 100 films, to be screened during 1995, is partly to reaffirm the network's repertory function. It is not an attempt to represent the history of cinema, only a version of it. If you were to video all the films on the list, you would have a solid collection of classics, but not the all-time greatest hits. If there is a model for our approach, it would be London's Electric Cinema Club in its heyday. There, in any one week, you might have seen *Fury*, *They Live by Night*, *Ashes and Diamonds*, *Once Upon a Time in the West* and *Performance*, a heady mix.

We have restricted the list to sound features, mixing classic Hollywood with

occasional British intrusions, groundbreaking art movies with a suggestion of what may be seen as significant in 100 years' time. The fact that the BBC does not have access to every film ever made means that we can only feign a degree of objectivity.

Certain films choose themselves. To leave out *Citizen Kane*, *Les Enfants du Paradis*, *The Night of the Hunter* or *Raging Bull* would be perverse. Others have a more symbolic role. The Bergman trio from the 50s stands for the extraordinary influence European art films exerted during that period. The leap between *The Sound of Music* and *Easy Rider* suggests

**First among equals: 'Citizen Kane'**



the impact of 60s youth culture. *Aguirre*, *Wrath of God* represents New German Cinema as well as appearing in its own right. Recent titles from Japan, Taiwan and China reflect the view that you have to look east for the most vital cinema today.

There is no hiding the absences or the subjectivity, but the two can be linked in interesting ways. The vulgar cynicism of *Kiss Me, Stupid* is a more refreshing choice than yet another re-run of *Some Like It Hot*. The neglected Anthony Mann Western *Man of the West* is interesting precisely because James Stewart isn't in it. Given the absence of Godard's *A bout de souffle*, the inclusion of Jim McBride's *Breathless* seems positively wilful. But when the latter film (Godard re-worked as Hollywood post-modern) gets a Quentin Tarantino rave, it becomes a choice for the moment. There are infinite variations on this game, and lists draw as much attention to what they exclude as to what they include. But what isn't here shouldn't detract from the pleasure of what is.

If I had to highlight one film, it would be the last. *The Days* is a quiet, black and white, low-budget Chinese movie. It will play late at night to a very small audience. But it gives a moving sense of the life of an ordinary couple in contemporary China. Watching it, you feel your eyes are being opened to something you would not otherwise see – which is what the BBC 100 is all about.

## Morocco

**1930/US/Josef von Sternberg**

Producer: Hector Turnbull, for Paramount; Cinematographer: Lee Garmes; Screenplay: Jules Furthman, Josef von Sternberg, based on the play *Amy Jolly* by Benno Vigny; Lead Actors: Gary Cooper, Marlene Dietrich, Adolph Menjou, Ullrich Haupt

## A Farewell to Arms

**1932/US/Frank Borzage**

Producer: Frank Borzage, for Paramount; Cinematographer: Charles Lang; Screenplay: Benjamin Glazer, Oliver H. P. Garrett, based on the novel by Ernest Hemingway; Lead Actors: Gary Cooper, Helen Hayes, Adolph Menjou, Mary Phillips, Jack La Rue

## King Kong

**1933/US/Merian C. Cooper, Ernest B. Schoedsack**

Producer: Merian C. Cooper, Ernest B. Schoedsack, for RKO/Radio; Cinematographer: Edward Linden, Vernon Walker, J. O. Taylor; Screenplay: James Ashmore Creelman, Ruth Rose, based on an idea of Merian C. Cooper and Edgar Wallace; Lead Actors: Fay Wray, Robert Armstrong, Bruce Cabot

## 42nd Street

**1933/US/Lloyd Bacon**

Producer: Warner Bros; Cinematographer: Sol Polito; Screenplay: Rian James, James Seymour, based on the novel by Bradford Ropes; Lead Actors: Warner Baxter, Bebe Daniels, Ruby Keeler, Dick Powell, George Brent, Ginger Rogers, Guy Kibbee

## The 39 Steps

**1935/UK/Alfred Hitchcock**

Producer: Michael Balcon, Ivor Montagu, for Gaumont-British Picture Corporation; Cinematographer: Bernard Knowles; Screenplay: Charles Bennett, Alma Reville, Ian Hay, based on the novel by John Buchan; Lead Actors: Madeleine Carroll, Robert Donat, Lucie Mannheim, Godfrey Tearle, Peggy Ashcroft, John Laurie

## Top Hat

**1935/US/Mark Sandrich**

Producer: Pandro S. Berman, for RKO/Radio; Cinematographer: David Abel, Vernon Walker; Screenplay: Dwight Taylor, Allan Scott; Lead Actors: Fred Astaire, Ginger Rogers, Edward Everett Horton, Helen Broderick

## The Bride of Frankenstein

**1935/US/James Whale**

Producer: Carl Laemmle Jr, for Universal; Cinematographer: John J. Mescall; Screenplay: John L. Balderston, William Hurlbut; Lead Actors: Colin Clive, Boris Karloff, Ernest Thesiger, Elsa Lanchester, Valerie Hobson

## Fury

**1936/US/Fritz Lang**

Producer: Joseph L. Mankiewicz, for MGM; Cinematographer: Joseph Ruttenberg; Screenplay: Bartlett Cormack, Fritz Lang, based on a story by Norman Krasna; Lead Actors: Spencer Tracy, Sylvia Sydney, Walter Abel, Edward Ellis, Walter Brennan

## The Adventures of Robin Hood

**1938/US/Michael Curtiz, William Keighley**

Producer: Hal B. Wallis, for Warner Bros; Cinematographer: Sol Polito, Tony Gaudio, W. Howard Green; Screenplay: Norman Reilly Raine, Seton I. Miller; Lead Actors: Errol Flynn, Olivia de Havilland, Basil Rathbone, Claude Rains, Alan Hale

**Joined in matrimony:**

'The Bride of Frankenstein', right





## Pre-1950 favourites

The makers of the BBC 100 were asked to name the films made before 1950 that have most significance to them

**Henning Bendtsen (Cinematographer, 'Gertrud')** *Citizen Kane*.

**Raoul Coutard (Cinematographer, 'Weekend')** Before 1950 there were three film-makers who had already invented modern cinema: D. W. Griffith, who defined cinematic grammar, Georges Méliès, who invented trick shots, and Abel Gance, with his projections on three screens, superimposed images and extraordinary camera movements.

**Claire Denis (Director, 'Chocolat')** This question could get a different answer every day. Today my answer would be an Ozu film, *Tokkan Kozu* (A Straightforward Boy). It's black and white and silent and it tells the story of two little boys in Tokyo.

**Terry Gilliam (Director, 'Brazil')** I had nightmares as a child due to Korda's *The Thief of Baghdad* – nightmares I can still remember. So I think it safe to assume it is the most significant film to me.

**Ian Ogilvy (Actor, 'Witchfinder General')** *Citizen Kane*. Boring answer but probably right.

**Paul Schrader (Screenwriter, 'Taxi Driver', 'Raging Bull'; director, 'American Gigolo')** *Citizen Kane*. There's not much choice here. When they play the national anthem, you have to stand and salute.

**Susan Seidelman (Director, 'Desperately Seeking Susan')** *Citizen Kane*.



'Les Enfants du Paradis'

**Peter Weir (Director, 'Picnic at Hanging Rock')** *Les Enfants du Paradis* from your list. But silent films had such a huge influence when I began in Australia in the 70s that I must salute those masters who taught me storytelling with images alone: Pudovkin, Chaplin, Lang and Hitchcock (favourites being *Storm over Asia*, *Modern Times*, *Metropolis* and *The Lodger*).

**Edward Yang (Director, 'A Brighter Summer Day')** An unsurprising omission is Mikio Naruse's *Floating Cloud*, made in 1955. I know very little about films made before 1950, and this is perhaps the one made around that time that I am most impressed with.



# Inspirations

Which of the list most influenced today's film-makers – and what are their favourite movies from it?

**Raoul Coutard** Out of the 100 I'd hesitate between *Les Enfants du Paradis* and *Ran*.  
**Claire Denis** It's difficult to draw a connection between your own work and films you admire, it doesn't usually work like that. However, there is a strong link between *Amarcord* and *Chocolat*. When I was thinking about *Chocolat*, I was very apprehensive because I didn't want my first film to be one set in the past. I am always circumspect about 'English' period films – I believe that it's better to tell a story set in the present. *Amarcord* taught me to work from memory and not from historical fact, to use images with no connection to a period reality.

Other films I admire, such as *Tokyo Story*, *Raging Bull*, *Do the Right Thing* and *Taxi Driver* nourish and encourage thinking about film-making as an art, but I wouldn't say they have a direct influence on my work.

**Terry Gilliam** If I were to pick out the films I most admire you would be stuck with about 50. I certainly don't want to become like the Academy Awards and pick a winner. Half the list has been incredibly influential in my development both as a film-lover and a film-maker, and probably as a person too. It's terrifying to think how much of my life has been determined by movies, good and bad. Some movies I admire for their technique, others for their ideas, others because



A family affair: 'Tokyo Story'



Class distortion: 'The Servant'

I was besotted by the leading lady. There is no way to isolate a handful of the best.

**Takeshi Kitano (Director, 'Sonatine')** It's hard to say since they are all titles in English, but from what I understand, *Taxi Driver* tops the list.

**Ian Ogilvy** *The 39 Steps*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *Casablanca*, *Brief Encounter*, *The Night of the Hunter* and *Billy Liar*.

**Paul Schrader** *La Règle du jeu*, *Tokyo Story*, *My Darling Clementine*, *The Life of Oharu*, *Citizen Kane*, *Vertigo*, *The Servant*, *Performance*.

**Susan Seidelman** *Citizen Kane*, *Brief Encounter*, *The Servant*, *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie*, *Amarcord*, *Badlands* and *Raging Bull*.

**Edward Yang** Werner Herzog's *Aguirre, Wrath of God* inspired my own career as an independent film-maker because it accomplished something totally new and progressive and against the grain of the formidable 60s. It suggested that a film could be made by one man's will alone. We made *A Brighter Summer Day* with the same kind of belief. There was no money, no industry support and no one thought it could be done.

**Peter Weir** I admire too many films from the list to pick a single favourite, but if you'd asked what double bill I'd like to see tonight, I'd say *On the Waterfront* with *The Seventh Seal*.

## Bringing Up Baby

1938/US/Howard Hawks

Producer: Howard Hawks, for RKO/Radio; Cinematographer: Russell Metty; Screenplay: Dudley Nichols, Hagar Wilde, based on a story by Hagar Wilde; Lead Actors: Cary Grant, Katharine Hepburn, May Robson, Charles Ruggles

## La Règle du jeu

1939/France/Jean Renoir

Producer: Claude Renoir; Cinematographer: Jean Bachelet, Alain Renoir; Screenplay: Jean Renoir, Karl Koch; Lead Actors: Marcel Dalio, Nora Grégory, Jean Renoir, Mila Parély, Julien Carette, Gaston Modot, Roland Toutain

## Dark Victory

1939/US/Edmund Goulding

Producer: Hal B. Wallis, for Warner Bros; Cinematographer: Ernest Haller; Screenplay: Casey Robinson, based on the play by George Emerson Brewer and Bertram Bloch; Lead Actors: Bette Davis, George Brent, Geraldine Fitzgerald, Humphrey Bogart, Ronald Reagan

## Stagecoach

1939/US/John Ford

Producer: John Ford, Walter Wanger, for United Artists; Cinematographer: Bert Glennon; Screenplay: Dudley Nichols, based on a short story 'Stage to Lordsburg' by Ernest Haycox; Lead Actors: John Wayne, Claire Trevor, Thomas Mitchell, Andy Devine

## The Wizard of Oz

1939/US/Victor Fleming

Producer: Mervyn LeRoy, for MGM; Cinematographer: Harold Rosson; Screenplay: Florence Ryerson, Noel Langley, Edgar Allan

Woolf, from the novel by L. Frank Baum; Lead Actors: Judy Garland, Frank Morgan, Ray Bolger, Bert Lahr, Jack Haley, Billie Burke, Margaret Hamilton

## Citizen Kane

1941/US/Orson Welles

Producer: Orson Welles, for RKO/Radio; Cinematographer: Gregg Toland; Screenplay: Herman J. Mankiewicz, Orson Welles; Lead Actors: Orson Welles, Joseph Cotten, Dorothy Comingore, Ruth Warrick, Everett Sloane, Agnes Moorehead, George Coulouris

## The Maltese Falcon

1941/US/John Huston

Producer: Hal B. Wallis, for Warner Bros; Cinematographer: Arthur Edson; Screenplay: John Huston, based on the novel by Dashiell Hammett; Lead Actors: Humphrey Bogart, Mary Astor, Jerome Cowan, Gladys George, Sydney Greenstreet, Peter Lorre, Elisha Cook Jr, Lee Patrick, Barton MacLane, Ward Bond, Walter Huston

Top brass: 'The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp'

## The Palm Beach Story

1942/US/Preston Sturges

Producer: Paul Jones, for Paramount; Cinematographer: Victor Milner; Screenplay: Preston Sturges; Lead Actors: Claudette Colbert, Joel McCrea, Mary Astor, Rudy Vallee

## Casablanca

1942/US/Michael Curtiz

Producer: Hal B. Wallis, for Warner Bros; Cinematographer: Arthur Edson; Screenplay: Julius J. Epstein, Philip G. Epstein, Howard Koch, Casey Robinson, based on the play *Everybody Comes to Rick's* by Murray Burnett, Joan Alison; Lead Actors: Humphrey Bogart, Ingrid Bergman, Paul Henreid, Claude Rains, Conrad Veidt, Sydney Greenstreet, Peter Lorre, Dooley Wilson

## The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp

1943/UK/Michael Powell, Emeric Pressburger

Producer: Michael Powell, Emeric Pressburger; Cinematographer: Georges Perinal; Screenplay: Michael Powell, Emeric Pressburger; Lead Actors: Anton Walbrook, Deborah Kerr, Roger Livesey, Roland Culver, Harry Welchman, Arthur Wontner, Albert Lieven, John Laurie, James McKechnie

## I Walked with a Zombie

1943/US/Jacques Tourneur

Producer: Val Lewton for RKO/Radio; Cinematographer: J. Roy Hunt; Screenplay: Curt Siodmak, Ardel Wray, based on an original story by Inez Wallace and Jane Eyre by Charlotte Brontë; Lead Actors: James Ellison, Frances Dee, Tom Conway, Edith Barrett, James Bell, Christine Gordon

## Meet Me in St. Louis

1944/US/Vincente Minnelli

Producer: Arthur Freed, for MGM; Cinematographer: George J. Folsey; Screenplay: Irving Brecher and Fred F. Finklehoffe, based on the novel by Sally Benson; Lead Actors: Judy Garland, Margaret O'Brien, Lucille Bremer, Mary Astor, Leon Ames, Tom Drake, Harry Davenport, Marjorie Main

## Les Enfants du Paradis

1945/France/Marcel Carné

Producer: Société Nouvelle Pathé-Cinema; Cinematographer: Roger Hubert, Marc Fossard; Screenplay: Jacques Prévert; Lead Actors: Arletty, Jean-Louis Barrault, Pierre Brasseur, Maria Casares, Marcel Herrand, Pierre Renoir, Louis Salou, Marcel Peres

## Mildred Pierce

1945/US/Michael Curtiz

Producer: Jerry Wald, for Warner Bros; Cinematographer: Ernest Haller; Screenplay: Ransal MacDougall and Catherine Turney, based on the novel by James M. Cain; Lead Actors: Joan Crawford, Bruce Bennett, Jack Carson, Zachary Scott, Ann Blyth

## Brief Encounter

1945/UK/David Lean

Producer: Noël Coward for Cineguild; Cinematographer: Robert Krasker; Screenplay: Noël Coward, David Lean, Anthony Havelock-Allan, based on the play *Still Life* by Noël Coward; Lead Actors: Celia Johnson, Trevor Howard, Cyril Raymond, Joyce Carey, Stanley Holloway, Everley Gregg

## Great Expectations

1946/UK/David Lean

Producer: Ronald Neame, for Cineguild; Cinematographer: Guy Green; Screenplay: David Lean, Ronald Neame, Anthony Havelock-Allan, Kay Walsh, Cecil McGivern, based on the novel by Charles Dickens; Lead Actors: John Mills, Anthony Wager, Valerie Hobson, Jean Simmons, Bernard Miles

## My Darling Clementine

1946/US/John Ford

Producer: Samuel G. Engel, for 20th Century-Fox; Cinematographer: Joe MacDonald; Screenplay: Samuel G. Engel, Winston Miller, based on an original story by Sam Hellman and the novel *Wyatt Earp*, *Frontier Marshall* by Stuart N. Lake; Lead Actors: Henry Fonda, Linda Darnell, Victor Mature, Cathy Downs, Walter Brennan

## Out of the Past:

(UK title: *Build My Gallows High*)

1947/US/Jacques Tourneur

Producer: Warren Duff, for RKO/Radio; Cinematographer: Nicholas Musuraca; Screenplay: Geoffrey Homes (Daniel Mainwaring), based on his novel *Build My Gallows High*; Lead Actors: Robert Mitchum, Jane Greer, Kirk Douglas, Rhonda Fleming, Steve Brodie

## Black Narcissus

1947/UK/Michael Powell, Emeric Pressburger

Producer: Michael Powell, Emeric Pressburger for J. Arthur Rank; Cinematographer: Jack Cardiff; Screenplay: Michael Powell, Emeric Pressburger, based on the novel by Rumer Godden; Lead Actors: Deborah Kerr, Kathleen Byron, David Farrar, Flora Robson, Jean Simmons, Sabu, Esmond Knight

## Hue and Cry

1947/UK/Charles Crichton

Producer: Michael Balcon, for Ealing; Cinematographer: Douglas Slocombe; Screenplay: T. E. B. Clarke; Lead Actors: Alastair Sim, Jack Warner, Harry Fowler, Frederick Piper, Vida Hope, Valerie White



# Making the 100

The film-makers recall some of the memorable moments, good and bad, that went into the making of their movies

**Henning Bentsen (Cinematographer, 'Gertrud')** In Denmark the cinematographer is both director of photography and camera operator. The most exciting aspect of my collaboration with Dreyer on *Gertrud* was his arrangement of long scenes and travelling shots. It was his wish, whenever it was artistically justified and achievable, to make the scene last as long as possible. Several times I had to tell Dreyer that we had only 11 minutes of film left in the camera.

**Raoul Coutard (Cinematographer, 'Weekend')** Godard had decided to annoy the producer and make him spend more money. After a difficult discussion, it was decided that there wouldn't be any filming during the first week, but the crew would be paid anyway, as they were using the free time to reflect on the film. What the producer didn't know was that in the second week we were shooting only in the mornings. The inevitable had to happen, and Godard probably hoped it would. At noon one day the producer's son-in-law turned up on set with his Rolls, bowler hat, brolley - very much the British city gent. The riggers were packing up the equipment and so he asked them: "Ah, you're changing the set?" One of them replied: "No, this week we're only working 9-12." The producer's son-in-law didn't know whether to swallow his brolley or his bowler.

**Claire Denis (Director, 'Chocolat')** When we started filming *Chocolat* in Cameroon we had to bring a lot of equipment either from France or from the southern part of the country because nothing was available in the north. On the eve of the first day's shooting, the generator had been lost somewhere in Cameroon for five



Crash dummies: 'Weekend'

days. It was on a huge truck we had brought from France by boat and the guy was supposed to drive up from the south, but he got lost. This truck then arrived, very dramatically, at sunset. It was the end of the rainy season and it was covered with red mud. It struck me that it was only because of a simple script of 100 pages that the crew was in Cameroon, that this guy had been driving for five days all across Cameroon. I should have been frightened by that, but I was just very moved. I wondered: "How is it possible that all those people trust me and trust my story?"

**Terry Gilliam (Director, 'Brazil')** My lasting impression of the making of *Brazil* was the feeling that we would never finish. We shot for nine months, having begun with a 20-week schedule. Despite the additional time, we still managed to come in \$1 million under budget. There are a great many mysteries associated with film-making, and that is still one of the greatest in my experience.

**Takeshi Kitano (Director, 'Sonatine')** The location shoot for *Sonatine* was on Ishigaki Island. In ancient stories, the island was where gods and goddesses descended to earth. There is a unique atmosphere on the island which is apparent in the scenes

I shot there that were supposedly set in Okinawa. It is hard to explain what I mean to those who have not experienced this magical place.

**Ian Ogilvy (Actor, 'Witchfinder General')** My enormous horse, called Captain, was almost uncontrollable once he got into a gallop, requiring half a mile in which to stop him - rather like an oil tanker. I also remember a scene (which goes by so fast, you don't really register what's happening) where the children of Lavenham are baking potatoes in the hot ashes of the fire which has just burned the witches.

**Susan Seidelman (Director, 'Desperately Seeking Susan')** It was the first time I worked with a professional film crew. I had previously made short student films and one low-budget feature, so the idea of working with a large union crew was intimidating at first. Quite honestly, the producers and I were caught by surprise when the film proved to be a success in America and abroad. It was a relatively low-key (and, by Hollywood standards, low-budget) production that we hoped would attract some attention, but we never expected the response it received. It was also the film debut of a group of then relatively unknown New York actors/performers such as John Turturro, Giancarlo Esposito, Ann Magnuson, Laurie Metcalf and Madonna.

**Peter Weir (Director, 'Picnic at Hanging Rock')** There was the bad news, delivered half way through shooting, that Vivien Merchant, whom I'd cast as the Headmistress, was ill and unable to join us. Followed by the good news that Rachel Roberts was available and was on a plane within 24 hours.



Escaping into the realm of dreams: Jonathan Pryce in 'Brazil'

## They Live by Night

1948/US/Nicholas Ray

Producer: John Houseman, for RKO/Radio; Cinematographer: George E. Diskant; Screenplay: Charles Schnee, based on Nicholas Ray's adaptation of the novel *Thieves Like Us* by Edward Anderson; Lead Actors: Cathy O'Donnell, Farley Granger, Howard da Silva, Jay C. Flippen, Helen Craig, Will Wright

## On the Town

1949/US/Gene Kelly, Stanley Donen

Producer: Arthur Freed for MGM; Cinematographer: Harold Rosson; Screenplay: Adolph Green, Betty Comden, based on their musical play from an idea of Jerome Robbins; Lead Actors: Gene Kelly, Frank Sinatra, Betty Garrett, Ann Miller, Jules Munshin, Vera-Ellen

## Gun Crazy

1949/US/Joseph H. Lewis

Producer: Frank King, Maurice King for United Artists; Cinematographer: Russell Harlan; Screenplay: Mackinlay Kantor, Millard Kaufman, based on the short story 'Gun Crazy' by Mackinlay Kantor; Lead Actors: Peggy Cummins, John Dall, Barry Kroeger, Morris Carnovsky

## La Ronde

1950/France/Max Ophüls

Producer: Sacha Gordiner; Cinematographer: Christian Matras; Screenplay: Jacques Natanson, Max Ophüls, based on the play *Der Reigen* by Arthur Schnitzler; Lead Actors: Anton Walbrook, Simone Signoret, Serge Reggiani, Simone Simon, Daniel Gélin, Danielle Dorrieux

## The Life of Oharu (Saikaku Ichidai Onna)

1952/Japan/Kenji Mizoguchi

Producer: Hideo Koi for Shin Toho; Cinematographer: Yoshimi Hirano; Screenplay: Yoshikata Yoda, Kenji Mizoguchi, based on the novel *Koshoku Ichidai Onna* by Ibara Saikaku; Lead Actors: Kinuyo Tanaka, Toshiro Mifune, Ichiro Sugai, Hisako Yamane

## Tokyo Story (Tokyo Monogatari)

1953/Japan/Yasujiro Ozu

Producer: Takeshi Yamamoto, for Shochiku Ofuna; Cinematographer: Yuharu Atsuta; Screenplay: Kogo Noda, Yasujiro Ozu; Lead Actors: Chishu Ryu, Chieko Higashiyama, So Yamamura, Haruko Sugimura, Setsuko Hara, Kyoko Kagawa, Kuniko Miyake

## On the Waterfront

1954/US/Elia Kazan

Producer: Sam Spiegel for Horizon; Cinematographer: Boris Kaufman; Screenplay: Budd Schulberg; Lead Actors: Marlon Brando, Eva Marie Saint, Karl Malden, Lee J. Cobb, Rod Steiger

## The Night of the Hunter

1955/US/Charles Laughton

Producer: Paul Gregory for United Artists; Cinematographer: Stanley Cortez; Screenplay: James Agee, based on the novel by Davis Grubb; Lead Actors: Robert Mitchum, Shelley Winters, Lillian Gish, Billy Chapin, Sally Jane Bruce

## Smiles of a Summer Night (Sommarnattens Leende)

1955/Sweden/Ingmar Bergman

Producer: Allan Ekelund for Svensk Filmindustri; Cinematographer: Gunnar Fischer; Screenplay: Ingmar Bergman; Lead Actors: Ulla Jacobsson, Eva Dahlbeck, Margit Carlquist, Harriet Andersson



## Beyond a Reasonable Doubt

1956/US/Fritz Lang

Producer: Bert Friedlob, for RKO/Radio;  
Cinematographer: William Snyder;  
Screenplay: Douglas Morrow; Lead Actors:  
Dana Andrews, Joan Fontaine,  
Sidney Blackmer, Philip Bourneuf

## The Searchers

1956/US/John Ford

Producer: Merian C. Cooper, Patrick Ford,  
for C. V. Whitney Pictures; Cinematographer:  
Winton C. Hoch; Screenplay: Frank S. Nugent,  
based on the novel by Alan LeMay; Lead  
Actors: John Wayne, Jeffrey Hunter, Vera  
Miles, Ward Bond, Natalie Wood, Lana Wood

## Written on the Wind

1956/US/Douglas Sirk

Producer: Albert Zugsmith for Universal;  
Cinematographer: Russell Metty; Screenplay:  
George Zuckerman, based on the novel by  
Robert Wilder; Lead Actors: Rock Hudson,  
Lauren Bacall, Robert Stack, Dorothy  
Malone, Robert Keith

The Seventh Seal  
(Dert Sjunde Inseglet)

1957/Sweden/Ingmar Bergman

Producer: Allan Ekelund for Svensk  
Filmindustri; Cinematographer: Gunnar  
Fischer; Screenplay: Ingmar Bergman, based  
on his play; Lead Actors: Max von Sydow,  
Gunnar Björnstrand, Bengt Ekerot

Wild Strawberries  
(Smultronstället)

1957/Sweden/Ingmar Bergman

Producer: Allan Ekelund for Svensk  
Filmindustri; Cinematographer: Gunnar  
Fischer; Screenplay: Ingmar Bergman;  
Lead Actors: Victor Sjöström, Bibi  
Andersson, Ingrid Thulin, Gunnar  
Björnstrand, Julian Kindahl

## Vertigo

1958/US/Alfred Hitchcock

Producer: Alfred Hitchcock for Paramount;  
Cinematographer: Robert Burks; Screenplay:  
Alec Coppel, Samuel Taylor, based on the  
novel *D'entre les morts* by Pierre Boileau,  
Thomas Narcejac; Lead Actors: James Stewart,  
Kim Novak, Barbara Bel Geddes

## Man of the West

1958/US/Anthony Mann

Producer: Walter M. Mirisch; Cinematographer:  
Ernest Haller; Screenplay: Reginald Rose,  
based on the novel by Will C. Brown;  
Lead Actors: Gary Cooper, Julie London,  
Lee J. Cobb, Arthur O'Connell, Jack Lord

Ashes and Diamonds  
(Popiół i Diament)

1958/Poland/Andrzej Wajda

Producer: Stanisław Adler for Film Polski;  
Cinematographer: Jerzy Wójcik; Screenplay:  
Jerzy Andrzejewski, Andrzej Wajda, based on  
the novel by Jerzy Andrzejewski; Lead Actors:  
Zbigniew Cybulski, Ewa Krzyżewska, Adam  
Pawlikowski, Wacław Zastrzeżyński

## North by Northwest

1959/US/Alfred Hitchcock

Producer: Alfred Hitchcock for MGM;  
Cinematographer: Robert Burks; Screenplay:  
Ernest Lehman; Lead Actors: Cary Grant,  
Eva Marie Saint, James Mason, Jessie Royce  
Landis, Leo G. Carroll, Philip Ober

Rocco and His Brothers  
(Rocco e i suoi fratelli)

1960/France, Italy/Luchino Visconti

Producer: Goffredo Lombardo for Titanus/

## Quickshots

1. Which of the films on the list do you most admire?
2. Which film do you think is a serious omission?
3. What is your most abiding memory of making your own listed film?
4. Which film made before 1950 is most significant to you?
5. Is there a film that you became aware of through television rather than through the cinema?

**Pedro Almodóvar (Director, 'Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown')**

1. *The Night of the Hunter*.
2. The films of Jacques Tati, Melville and Marcel Carné, *All About Eve*, *El Verdugo* (The Executioner, Luis G. Berlanga), *La dolce vita*, *Opening Night*, *Lawrence of Arabia*, *Ninotchka*, *The Battle of Algiers*, *This Sporting Life*, *A bout de souffle*, *Some Like It Hot*, *Psycho*, *A Passage to India*, *The Dead*, *Short Cuts* and *Reservoir Dogs*.
3. My most abiding memory is of directing an actress who was going through a profound depression in her personal life and managing to convert her into a character of high comedy.
4. *La Règle du jeu*, *Leave Her to Heaven*.
5. *Gun Crazy*.

**Richard Gere**

**(Actor, 'Breathless', 'American Gigolo')**

1. It's impossible, there are so many.
2. *Bicycle Thieves* and *Days of Heaven*.
3. I remember the day I found the pair of pants that I wore in *Breathless* in a second-hand clothes shop in Melrose. They looked like my father's golf pants. When I found them, I knew I had the character. Also *Gun Crazy* (which features on the BBC list) is the film within the film in *Breathless*. I make love to the girl behind the screen when *Gun Crazy* is playing.
4. No comment.
5. When I was a kid I saw more movies on television than I saw at the cinema. Especially afternoons watching the Hollywood matinee.

**Deborah Kerr (Actor, 'Black Narcissus' and 'The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp')**

1. *Citizen Kane*.
2. *The Innocents*.
3. My most abiding memory of making *Black Narcissus* is of the constant 'Himalayan wind' (created by wind machines in the UK) that blew relentlessly and left us all with terrible colds.

**Andrei Konchalovsky  
(Co-screenwriter, 'Andrei Rublev')**

1. *Amarcord*.
2. *La strada*, *Runaway Train*.
3. My most abiding memory of *Andrei Rublev* is of shoe-horning the story into the script, then shoe-horning the script into the dailies, then shoe-horning the dailies into the final cut.
4. *Citizen Kane*.
5. *Scenes from a Marriage*.

Les Films Marceau; Cinematographer:  
Giuseppe Rotunno; Screenplay:  
Luchino Visconti, Suso Cecchi D'Amico,  
Pasquale Festa Campanile, Massimo  
Franciosa, Enrico Medioli, Vasco Pratolini,  
based on the novel *Il ponte della ghisola* by Giovanni Testori; Lead Actors:  
Alain Delon, Annie Girardot, Katina  
Paxinou, Renato Salvatori, Roger Hanin

## El Cid

1961/US, Italy/Anthony Mann

Producer: Samuel Bronston; Cinematographer:

**Jerry Lewis  
(Director/actor, 'The Nutty Professor')**

1. *Citizen Kane*.
2. *Wuthering Heights* (1939), *Schindler's List*, *Gone with the Wind*.
3. Working with the very best and having a good time... and knowing we were 'doing a classic'.
4. *Citizen Kane*.
5. That hasn't happened. I see films when they are released.

**Michael Tolkin (Screenwriter, 'The Player')**

1. Impossible to pick.
2. *Killer of Sheep*, and also, no Fassbinder.
3. Robert Wagner and Jill St John. I was too thunderstruck to remember that they were in *How I Spent That Summer Vacation*, so I never got to tell them how much that television movie meant to me.
4. Impossible to pick.
5. *Seven Samurai*.

**Keith Waterhouse (Screenwriter, 'Billy Liar')**

1. *King Kong*, *Citizen Kane* and *Brief Encounter*.
2. *The Wages of Fear*.
3. My abiding memory of making *Billy Liar* is the casting of Julie Christie, brought in to replace the actress playing Liz, who fell ill a few days into shooting. Though most of her scenes were re-shot, the big army march-past was too costly to do again, so Billy's companion as he takes the salute from the balcony is not Julie Christie but her predecessor (in long shot, of course).
4. *Hue and Cry* – it was the first of the Ealing comedies.



Rank outsider: Tom Courtenay in 'Billy Liar'

Robert Krasker; Screenplay: Fredric M. Frank, Philip Yordan, inspired by the poem 'La Poema Del Cid'; Lead Actors: Charlton Heston, Sophia Loren, Raf Vallone, John Fraser

## Viridiana

1961/Spain, Mexico/Luis Buñuel

Producer: R. Muñoz Suay; Cinematographer:  
José F. Aguayo; Screenplay: Luis Buñuel,  
Julio Alejandro; Lead Actors: Silvia Pinal,  
Francisco Rabal, Fernando Rey,  
Margarita Lozano

## Sanjuro

1962/Japan/Akira Kurosawa

Producer: Ryuzo Kikushima, Tomoyuki  
Tanaka, for Toho/Kurosawa Films;  
Cinematographer: Fukuzo Kuizumi, Kozo  
Saito; Screenplay: Ryuzo Kikushima, Hideo  
Oguni, Akira Kurosawa, from the novel by  
Shugoro Yamamoto; Lead Actors: Toshiro  
Mifune, Tatsuya Nakadai, Masao Shimizu,  
Yunosuke Ito

## The Servant

1963/UK/Joseph Losey

Producer: Joseph Losey, Norman Priggen;  
Cinematographer: Douglas Slocombe;  
Screenplay: Harold Pinter, based on the  
novel by Robin Maugham; Lead Actors:  
Dirk Bogarde, Sarah Miles, Wendy Craig,  
James Fox

## The Nutty Professor

1963/US/Jerry Lewis

Producer: Ernest D. Glucksman, for  
Paramount; Cinematographer: W. Wallace  
Kelley; Screenplay: Jerry Lewis, Bill Richmond;  
Lead Actors: Jerry Lewis, Stella Stevens,  
Del Moore, Kathleen Freeman

## Billy Liar

1963/UK/John Schlesinger

Producer: Joseph Janni; Cinematographer:  
Denys Coop; Screenplay: Keith Waterhouse,  
Willis Hall, based on the novel by Keith  
Waterhouse and the play by Keith  
Waterhouse and Willis Hall; Lead Actors:  
Tom Courtenay, Julie Christie, Wilfred  
Pickles, Mona Washbourne, Ethel Griffies

## Kiss Me, Stupid

1964/US/Billy Wilder

Producer: Billy Wilder; Cinematographer: Joseph  
LaSelle; Screenplay: Billy Wilder, I. A. L.  
Diamond, suggested by the play *L'ora della fantasia* by Anna Bonacci; Lead Actors: Dean  
Martin, Kim Novak, Ray Walston, Felicia Farr

## Gertrud

1964/Denmark/Carl Theodor Dreyer

Producer: Jørgen Nielsen; Cinematographer:  
Henning Bendtsen, Arne Abrahamsen;  
Screenplay: Carl Theodor Dreyer, from the  
play by Hjalmar Soderberg; Lead Actors:  
Nina Pens Rode, Bendt Rothe, Ebbe Rode

## The Sound of Music

1965/US/Robert Wise

Producer: Robert Wise; Cinematographer: Ted  
McCord; Screenplay: Ernest Lehman, based on  
the stage musical by Richard Rodgers and  
Oscar Hammerstein II and the book by  
Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse; Lead  
Actors: Julie Andrews, Christopher Plummer,  
Eleanor Parker, Richard Haydn, Peggy Wood

Closely Observed Trains  
(Ostre Sledované Vlaky)

1966/Czechoslovakia/Jiří Menzel

Producer: Zdenek Oves; Cinematographer:  
Jaromír Šofr; Screenplay: Jiří Menzel and  
Bohumil Hrabal, from the novel by Bohumil  
Hrabal; Lead Actors: Václav Neckář, Jitka  
Bendová, Vladimír Valenta, Libuše Havelková

## La Guerre est finie

1966/France, Sweden/Alain Resnais

Producer: Alain Queffelec; Cinematographer:  
Sacha Vierny; Screenplay: Jorge Semprun;  
Lead Actors: Yves Montand, Ingrid Thulin,  
Geneviève Bujold, Dominique Rozan

## Weekend (Le Week-end)

1967/France, Italy/Jean-Luc Godard

Producer: Comacio, Films Copernic, Lira  
Films, Ascot Cinerad; Cinematographer:  
Raoul Coutard; Screenplay: Jean-Luc Godard;  
Lead Actors: Mireille Darc, Jean Yanne,  
Jean-Pierre Kalfon, Valérie Lagrange



## Once Upon a Time in the West (C'era una volta il West)

1968/Italy, US/Sergio Leone

Producer: Bino Cicogna, Fulvio Morsella;  
Cinematographer: Tonino Delli Colli;  
Screenplay: Sergio Leone, Sergio Donati, based  
on a story by Dario Argento, Bernardo  
Bertolucci, Sergio Leone; Lead Actors: Henry  
Fonda, Claudia Cardinale, Jason Robards,  
Charles Bronson, Frank Wolff

## Witchfinder General (US title: The Conqueror Worm)

1968/UK/Michael Reeves

Producer: Arnold L. Miller, Louis M. Heyward;  
Cinematographer: Johnny Coquillon;  
Screenplay: Michael Reeves, Tom Baker,  
from the novel by Ronald Bassett;  
Lead Actors: Vincent Price, Ian Ogilvy,  
Hilary Dwyer, Rupert Davies

## Easy Rider

1969/US/Dennis Hopper

Producer: Peter Fonda; Cinematographer:  
Laszlo Kovacs; Screenplay: Peter Fonda,  
Dennis Hopper, Terry Southern;  
Lead Actors: Peter Fonda, Dennis Hopper,  
Antonio Mendoza, Phil Spector, Jack  
Nicholson, Robert Walker Jr.

## Andrei Rublev

1969/USSR/Andrei Tarkovsky

Producer: Mosfilm Studio, Moscow;  
Cinematographer: Vadim Youssov; Screenplay:  
Andrei Konchalovsky, Andrei Tarkovsky;  
Lead Actors: Anatoli Solonitzine, Ivan Lapikov,  
Nikolai Grinko, Nikolai Sergeyev

## Performance

1970/UK/Donald Cammell, Nicolas Roeg

Producer: Sandy Lieberman; Cinematographer:  
Nicolas Roeg; Screenplay: Donald Cammell;  
Lead Actors: James Fox, Mick Jagger, Anita  
Pallenberg, Michèle Breton, Ann Sidney,  
John Bindon

## Claire's Knee (Le Genou de Claire)

1970/France/Eric Rohmer

Producer: Pierre Cottrell; Cinematographer:  
Nestor Almendros; Screenplay: Eric Rohmer;  
Lead Actors: Jean-Claude Brialy, Aurora Cornu,  
Béatrice Romand, Laurence de Monaghan,  
Michèle Montel, Gérard Falconetti,  
Fabrice Luchini

## The Spider's Stratagem (La strategia del ragno)

1970/Italy/Bernardo Bertolucci

Producer: Giovanni Bertolucci;  
Cinematographer: Vittorio Storaro, Franco di

## Cinema and television

Is television changing the way films are made, as well as viewing habits? Are the two media converging?

**Raoul Coutard** Television has educated the spectator to certain cinematic short cuts, but too often it doesn't raise the level of appreciation. There are films you get to know first on television because you didn't have time to see them, or didn't want to, when they were first released. Watching a film on television bears no relation to watching it in a cinema. The image is chopped off at the sides and the editing loses much of its fluidity. But the most important thing is that you lose the conviviality of the auditorium – that sort of religious mass where an impalpable spirit passes among the audience.

**David Cronenberg (Director, 'Dead Ringers')**

Cinema and television are becoming more entangled than ever. I was thinking about *Odd Man Out* and I couldn't remember whether I'd seen it on television or at the cinema. It was scary and significant because I realised that the two media are blending together. Then I remembered there was a film I saw in the early days of television in black and white which for years I didn't realise was in colour. In the old days when you saw films on television you just assumed they were in black and white because most films were. I was made aware of this yet again when I went to see Woody Allen's *Play It Again Sam* in the cinema. When the clips from *Casablanca* came on, I realised I had never seen that film on the big screen.

The technology for watching films on television has improved so much with bigger screens that the experience of watching films at home is getting more like being in a cinema. I'm in favour of this because I like the fact that it's becoming a more interactive experience. It's a very social thing with kids. They get together in groups and watch videos

Giacomo; Screenplay: Bernardo Bertolucci, Eduardo de Gregorio, Marilu Parolini, based on the story 'Theme of the Traitor and the Hero' by Jorge Luis Borges; Lead Actors: Giulio Brogi, Alida Valli, Tino Scotti, Pippo Campanini, Franco Giovannelli, Allen Midgett

## Death in Venice (Morte a Venezia)

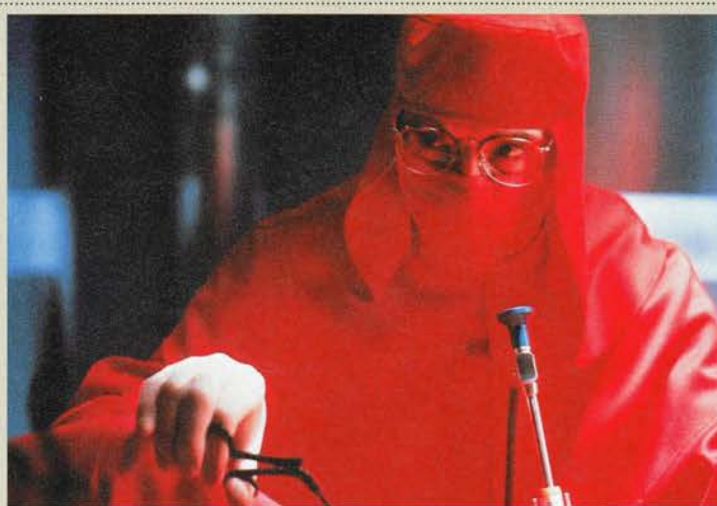
1971/Italy/Luchino Visconti

Producer: Mario Gallo, Luchino Visconti, Nicolas Badalucco, Robert Gordon Edwards; Cinematographer: Pasquale de Santis; Screenplay: Luchino Visconti, Nicola Badalucco, from the novel by Thomas Mann; Lead Actors: Dirk Bogarde, Björn Andresen, Silvano Manganò, Mark Burns, Marisa Berenson

## Aguirre, Wrath of God (Aguirre, der Zorn Gottes)

1972/West Germany/Werner Herzog

Producer: Werner Herzog; Cinematographer: Thomas Mauch, Joan Francisco, Orlando Macchiavelli; Screenplay: Werner Herzog; from the journal



Theatrical technique: Jeremy Irons in 'Dead Ringers'

at each other's houses and I'm encouraged by that. Of course it's a very anti-Kubrickian approach. Kubrick is notorious for trying to ensure that every screening of his films is as near a perfect projection as possible, but I went to a screening of one of his movies where the print was scratched to hell and I realised that at some point you have to let it go.

**Claire Denis** I don't watch television often. I don't have cable or Canal + and I watch it mainly for news. However, when I saw Scorsese's *Cape Fear*, I had a very clear memory of J. Lee Thompson's original film, which I'd seen on television. I also saw Fritz Lang's *Moonfleet* on the small screen. Both of these are films I now want to see in a cinema.

**Susan Seidelman** I first saw several of the BBC 100 on television, especially those made before 1965. Growing up in pre-video suburban America, there wasn't any opportunity other than television to view old films. I can remember as a kid staying up past midnight to catch *I Walked with a Zombie*, *They Live by Night*

and *I Was a Fugitive on a Chain Gang* on *The Late Late Movie*.

**Peter Weir** The influence growing up in Sydney in the 50s was not so much movies as television series – especially *Hitchcock's Half Hour*, *The Twilight Zone* and the Westerns. As for film-makers, I discovered Val Lewton and John Ford through television. Before television arrived in 1956, comic books were something of an obsession. They are virtually storyboards and they helped prepare me for movie-making.

**Edward Yang** How many of us go to hear live opera nowadays? This is not just to say that television has broadened opportunities for film viewing, but that the experience of watching films on television is being made more accessible and of better quality with fast-advancing high technology. It will become closer to the way we consume music. Of course, nothing can replace watching a film in the cinema. Nothing can replace going to a Rolling Stones concert either, but mostly we listen to the Stones on CDs and cassettes, don't we?

of Gaspar de Carvajal; Lead Actors: Klaus Kinski, Cecilia Rivera, Ruy Guerra, Helena Rojo

## The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie (Le Charme discret de la bourgeoisie)

1972/France, Italy, Spain/Luis Buñuel

Producer: Serge Silbermann; Cinematographer: Edmond Richard; Screenplay: Luis Buñuel, Jean-Claude Carrière; Lead Actors: Fernando Rey, Paul Frankeur, Delphine Seyrig, Bulle Ogier, Stéphane Audran, Jean-Pierre Cassel

## Spirit of the Beehive (El espíritu de la colmena)

1973/Spain/Victor Erice

Producer: Elias Querejeta; Cinematographer: Luis Cuadrado; Screenplay: Francisco J. Querejeta; Lead Actors: Fernando Fernán Gómez, Teresa Gimpera, Ana Torrent, Isabel Tellería

## Scenes from a Marriage (Scener ur ett Äktenskap)

1973/Sweden/Ingmar Bergman

Producer: Ingmar Bergman; Cinematographer:

Sven Nykvist; Screenplay: Ingmar Bergman; Lead Actors: Liv Ullmann, Erland Josephson, Bibi Andersson, Jan Malmström, Anita Wall, Gunnel Lindblom

## Amarcord

1973/Italy, France/Federico Fellini

Producer: Franco Cristaldi; Cinematographer: Giuseppe Rotunno; Screenplay: Federico Fellini, Tonino Guerra; Lead Actors: Pupella Maggio, Magali Noël, Armando Brancia, Ciccio Ingrassia

## The Long Goodbye

1973/US/Robert Altman

Producer: Jerry Bick; Cinematographer: Vilmos Zsigmond; Screenplay: Leigh Brackett, based on the novel by Raymond Chandler; Lead Actors: Elliott Gould, Nina van Pallandt, Sterling Hayden, Mark Rydell, Henry Gibson, David Arkin

## Badlands

1973/US/Terrence Malick

Producer: Terrence Malick; Cinematographer: Brian Probyn, Tak Fujimoto, Stevan Lerner; Screenplay: Terrence Malick; Lead Actors: Martin Sheen, Sissy Spacek, Warren Oates, Ramon Bieri



Martin Sheen  
in 'Badlands'



# Time and emotion

Director Wang Xiaoshuai talks to Tony Rayns about his film 'The Days'

I finished making *The Days* in January 1993, and didn't write or say anything about the film for some time afterwards. As the director, I thought I shouldn't explain myself too much. But in the last year I've travelled with the film to a number of festivals, where I've had to discuss it and answer questions from audiences. In Rotterdam, one woman asked me why I focused the film so much on the central couple and didn't show more of the external factors that wear them down. I said that if you see someone entering a room in a wet raincoat, you can see that it's raining; the film doesn't need to show the rain.

A large part of *The Days* is based on the experiences of a friend of mine; the rest was drawn from my own. For many years, we have been prey to feelings that seem almost overwhelmingly intense to us, swamping our sense of life's everyday realities. My wish is that we who live in China can get past such feelings, feelings that we are scared of. We need a little more hope, a little more freedom, a little more autonomy for the individual... and a little less separation and pain.

Like me, the film's protagonists are approaching the age of 30. But they are still searching for something: a



An ordinary couple: 'The Days'

goal in life, a way to survive... One of them, the woman, even plans to leave for America in her search. What is she looking for? The man remains trapped in his cell, trapped in a life devoid of excitement. Without pressure, there is no resistance or rebellion. But it's a natural trait of young people to rebel. Are we in my generation lucky that we face less suppression than earlier generations? It seems to me that this conundrum has left us lost and aimless. The first challenge in finding a direction lies in overcoming what we are!

**Cinematographer:** Stephen H. Burum;  
**Screenplay:** S. E. Hinton, Francis Ford Coppola, based on the novel by S. E. Hinton;  
**Lead Actors:** Matt Dillon, Mickey Rourke, Diane Lane, Dennis Hopper, Diana Scarwid, Vincent Spano, Nicolas Cage, Christopher Penn, Larry Fishburne

## Breathless

1983/US/Jim McBride

**Producer:** Martin Erlichman; **Cinematographer:** Richard H. Kline; **Screenplay:** L. M. Kit Carson, Jim McBride, based on the script of *A bout Madonnabee: 'Desperately Seeking Susan'*



My strongest memory from the period of shooting is the extraordinary honesty of everyone who worked on the film. Nobody worried about the lack of equipment and resources; they just gave the film everything they felt most deeply about the way all of us have to live our lives these days. Sometimes, when I watch the film again at a festival, I'm still moved by the way everyone trusted the project to express what they felt.

My answer to your question about memories of films seen on television is probably different from that of other directors. In China, no film you're likely to want to see is going to appear on television. Or in cinemas, for that matter. Most of the films that have made an impression on me are things that I've seen on videotape. Like everyone in China, I've had to make do with seeing very poor dupes of dupes. Some of the most beautiful films I know are Japanese movies of the 60s that I saw on lousy videotapes. But the film that stays with me most strongly is probably Fei Mu's *Spring in a Small Town* (Xiao Cheng Zhi Chun, 1948). That was a film made in incredibly difficult circumstances, and it's a great achievement. *The Days* won the Grand Prix at the 1994 Thessaloniki Film Festival

**de souffle** (1959) by François Truffaut;  
**Lead Actors:** Richard Gere, Valerie Kaprisky, William Tepper, John P. Ryan, Art Metrano

## Brazil

1985/UK/Terry Gilliam

**Producer:** Arnon Milchan; **Cinematographer:** Roger Pratt; **Screenplay:** Terry Gilliam, Tom Stoppard, Charles McKeown;  
**Lead Actors:** Jonathan Price, Robert De Niro, Katherine Helmond, Ian Holm, Bob Hoskins, Michael Palin

## Desperately Seeking Susan

1985/US/Susan Seidelman

**Producer:** Sarah Pillsbury, Midge Sanford for Orion; **Cinematographer:** Edward Lachman; **Screenplay:** Leora Barish; **Lead Actors:** Rosanna Arquette, Madonna, Aidan Quinn, Mark Blum

## Ran

1985/France, Japan/Akira Kurosawa

**Producer:** Serge Silberman, Masato Hara; **Cinematographer:** Takao Saito, Masaharu Ueda, Asakazu Nakai; **Screenplay:** Akira Kurosawa, Hideo Oguni, Masato Ide, from *King Lear* by William Shakespeare; **Lead Actors:** Tatsuya Nakadai, Akira Terao, Jinpachi Nezu, Daisuke Ryu, Mieko Harada, Yoshiko Miyazaki

## Blue Velvet

1986/US/David Lynch

**Producer:** De Laurentis Entertainment Group; **Cinematographer:** Frederick Elmes; **Screenplay:** David Lynch; **Lead Actors:** Kyle MacLachlan, Isabella Rossellini, Dennis Hopper, Laura Dern, Hope Lange, Dean Stockwell

## Platoon

1986/US/Oliver Stone

**Producer:** Arnold Kopelson; **Cinematographer:** Robert Richardson; **Screenplay:** Oliver Stone; **Lead Actors:** Tom Berenger, Willem DaFoe, Charlie Sheen, Forest Whitaker, Francesco Quinn, John C. McGinley

## Down by Law

1986/US/Jim Jarmusch

**Producer:** Alan Kleinberg; **Cinematographer:** Robby Müller; **Screenplay:** Jim Jarmusch; **Lead Actors:** Tom Waits, John Lurie, Roberto Benigni, Nicoletta Braschi, Ellen Barkin

## A Short Film about Killing (Krótki Film o Zabijaniu)

1988/Poland/Krzysztof Kieślowski

**Producer:** Ryszard Chutkowski; **Cinematographer:** Sławomir Idziak; **Screenplay:** Krzysztof Piesiewicz, Krzysztof Kieślowski; **Lead Actors:** Mirosław Baka, Krzysztof Globisz, Jan Tesarz, Zbigniew Zapasiewicz

## Chocolat

1988/France, Germany, Cameroon/Claire Denis

**Producer:** Alain Belmondo; **Cinematographer:** Robert Alazraki; **Screenplay:** Claire Denis, Jean-Pol Fargeau; **Lead Actors:** Isaach de Bankolé, Giulia Boschi, François Cluzet, Jean-Claude Adelin

## Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown (Mujeres al borde de un ataque de nervios)

1988/Spain/Pedro Almodóvar

**Producer:** Antonio Lloréns; **Cinematographer:** José Luis Alcaine; **Screenplay:** Pedro Almodóvar; **Lead Actors:** Carmen Maura, Antonio Banderas, Julieta Serrano, María Barranco, Rossy de Palma, Fernando Guillén

## Dead Ringers

1988/Canada/David Cronenberg

**Producer:** David Cronenberg, Marc Boyman; **Cinematographer:** Peter Suschitzky; **Screenplay:** David Cronenberg, Norman Snider, based on the book *Twins* by Bari Wood, Jack Geasland; **Lead Actors:** Jeremy Irons, Genevieve Bujold, Heidi von Palleske, Barbara Gordon, Shirley Douglas, Stephen Lack

## Do the Right Thing

1989/US/Spike Lee

**Producer:** Spike Lee; **Cinematographer:** Ernest Dickerson; **Screenplay:** Spike Lee; **Lead Actors:** Danny Aiello, Ossie Davis, Ruby Dee, Richard Edson, Giancarlo Esposito, Spike Lee, Bill Nunn, John Turturro, Rosie Perez

## Sweetie

1989/Australia/Jane Campion

**Producer:** John Maynard, William McKinnon; **Cinematographer:** Sally Bongers; **Screenplay:** Gerard Lee, Jane Campion; **Lead Actors:** Genevieve Lemon, Karen Colston, Tom Lycos, Jon Darling, Dorothy Barry

## Tilai

1990/Burkina Faso, Switzerland, France/Idrissa Ouedraogo

**Producer:** Idrissa Ouedraogo; **Cinematographer:** Jean Monsigny, Pierre Laurent Chenieux; **Screenplay:** Idrissa Ouedraogo; **Lead Actors:** Rasmane Ouedraogo, Ina Cissé, Roukietou Barry, Assane Ouedraogo, Sibidou Sidibe



Love hurts: 'Blue Velvet'

## Picnic at Hanging Rock

1975/Australia/Peter Weir

**Producer:** Hal McElroy, Jim McElroy; **Cinematographer:** Russell Boyd; **Screenplay:** Cliff Green, based on the novel by Joan Lindsay; **Lead Actors:** Rachel Roberts, Dominic Guard, Helen Morse, Jacki Weaver

## Taxi Driver

1976/US/Martin Scorsese

**Producer:** Michael Phillips, Julia Phillips, Phillip M. Goldfarb; **Cinematographer:** Michael Chapman; **Screenplay:** Paul Schrader; **Lead Actors:** Robert De Niro, Cybill Shepherd, Jodie Foster, Harvey Keitel, Leonard Harris

## Wise Blood

1979/US, West Germany/John Huston

**Producer:** Michael Fitzgerald, Kathy Fitzgerald; **Cinematographer:** Gerry Fisher; **Screenplay:** Benedict Fitzgerald, Michael Fitzgerald, based on the novel by Flannery O'Connor; **Lead Actors:** Brad Dourif, Ned Beatty, Harry Dean Stanton, Daniel Shor, Amy Wright, John Huston

## Raging Bull

1980/US/Martin Scorsese

**Producer:** Irwin Winkler, Robert Chartoff; **Cinematographer:** Michael Chapman; **Screenplay:** Paul Schrader, Mardik Martin from the book by Jake La Motta with Peter Savage; **Lead Actors:** Robert De Niro, Cathy Moriarty, Joe Pesci, Frank Vincent

## American Gigolo

1980/US/Paul Schrader

**Producer:** Jerry Bruckheimer, for Paramount; **Cinematographer:** John Bailey; **Screenplay:** Paul Schrader; **Lead Actors:** Richard Gere, Lauren Hutton, Hector Elizondo, Nina van Pallandt, Bill Duke, Brian Davies

## Rumble Fish

1983/US/Francis Ford Coppola

**Producer:** Fred Roos, Doug Claybourne;



## Omissions

Which films does the list miss out?

**Raoul Coutard** Antonioni's *Blow-Up*, Dreyer's *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc*.  
**Claire Denis** Robert Bresson's *Pickpocket*.  
**Terry Gilliam** The most serious omission from the list is any film by Stanley Kubrick. How can one of the great film-makers of all time not be represented by the inclusion of *Paths of Glory* or *Dr Strangelove* or *2001*?  
**Takeshi Kitano** Stanley Kubrick's *2001*. I am very surprised that a movie of this calibre is not on the list.

**Ian Ogilvy** *Singin' in the Rain* – come on, this is the best film musical ever made.

**Paul Schrader** A grievous omission is Bertolucci's *The Conformist*. This film is a touchstone for today's film-makers in the way that *Citizen Kane* was for an earlier generation. The absence of Robert Bresson's *Diary of a Country Priest* is also unfortunate. At a personal level, I have an enduring fondness for my film *Mishima*.

**Susan Seidelman** I'm a big admirer of the films of Billy Wilder, particularly *Sunset Boulevard* and *The Apartment*. I would also have included Fellini's *8½*.

**Peter Weir** I miss *The Third Man* and *Dr Strangelove* among others.

**Edward Yang** I don't believe I will be the only one to point out the omission of Fellini's *8½*.

## A Brighter Summer Day (Guling Jie Shaonian Sha Ren Shijian)

1991/Taiwan/Edward Yang

Producer: Yu Weiyan; Cinematographer: Zhang Huigong, Li Longyu; Screenplay: Edward Yang, Yan Hongya, Yang Shunqing, Lai Mingtang; Lead Actors: Zhang Zhen, Lisa Yang, Zhang Guozhu, Elaine Jin, Wang Juan, Zhang Han, Jiang Xiuqiong, Lai Fanyun

## The Player

1992/US/Robert Altman

Producer: David Brown, Michael Tolkin, Nick Wechsler; Cinematographer: Jean Lepine; Screenplay: Michael Tolkin; Lead Actors: Tim Robbins, Greta Scacchi, Fred Ward, Whoopi Goldberg, Peter Gallagher, Brion James, Cynthia Stevenson, Vincent D'Onofrio, Dean Stockwell, Richard E. Grant

## Sonatine

1993/Japan/Takeshi Kitano

Producer: Masayuki Mori, Hisao Nabeshima, Takio Yoshida; Cinematographer: Katsumi Yanagishima; Screenplay: Takeshi Kitano; Lead Actors: 'Beat' Takeshi (Takeshi Kitano), Aya Kokumai, Tetsu Watanabe, Masanobu Katsumura, Susumu Terashima, Ren Ohsugi

## Farewell My Concubine (Ba Wang Bie Ji)

1993/Hong Kong, China/Chen Kaige

Producer: Hsu Feng; Cinematographer: Gu Changwei; Screenplay: Lilian Lee, Lu Wei, based on the novel by Lilian Lee; Lead Actors: Leslie Cheung, Zhang Fengyi, Gong Li, Lu Qi

## The Days (Dong-Chun De Rizhi)

1993/China/Wang Xiaoshuai

Producer: Liu Jie, Zhang Hongtao, Wang Yao; Cinematographer: Liu Jie, Wu Di; Screenplay: Wang Xiaoshuai; Lead Actors: Liu Xiaodong, Yu Hong, Lou Yez

# BOX OF DELIGHTS

Andy Medhurst celebrates the joy of watching film on television

According to a certain kind of cinematic purist, television is no place to see film. The small screen shrinks and cheapens, while its controllers censor with insensitively blunt scissors. What such a lofty view overlooks is that for many people, television is the only place to see films – or at least the only place to acquaint themselves with conceptions of cinema beyond the remit of the local Odeon. Purists tend to forget that *Pwellheli* and *Peterhead* are rather more than a taxi journey from the NFT, and that television is our national repertory cinema.

Without television screenings of a wide range of historical and international material, cinema would, for most people in Britain, mean nothing more than contemporary big-budget Hollywood. As demonstrated by thematic seasons on BBC2 and Channel 4 and consistently intelligent programming of mainstream films on BBC1 – not to mention the hidden gems pumped out by cable channels like TNT and Bravo (where else could you see *Devil Girls from Mars* on a November Thursday evening?) – British television treats cinema with affection and respect. Only ITV lets the side down, luring large audiences with famous recent titles it butchers.

## Filth and art

Television is also where most of us fell in love with film. If I hadn't stumbled across *King's Row* one Saturday afternoon or *The Bitter Tears of Petra Von Kant* late one Friday night, their intoxicating glories might forever have been lost to me. To remember when they were screened is revealing, since scheduling frequently lends films significance. Atrocious horrors can be assigned a cult status by being targeted at what media demographers have identified as the too-pissed-to-care market, while I defy anyone to watch *Genevieve* without feeling full of Sunday lunch or to see *The Great Escape* other than through the discarded wrapping paper of Boxing Day. Television can secure films a place in the national consciousness they could never hope to gain through the minority practice of cinema screenings.

Themed seasons draw on a public-service, broadcasting didacticism, inviting viewers to develop critical faculties through comparative analysis. This can appear patronising, but they are also a useful way of finding screen time for oddities and obscurities. BBC2's *Moviedrome* exemplifies this, and though it always hovers on the brink of degenerating into a boys' club for *Empire*-reading anoraks and Tarantino wannabes, it in fact delivers enough surprises



Future classic: 'Sweetie'

to justify Alex Cox's pay packet.

The on-screen compère-critic needs to tread a fine line if s/he is to avoid wagging a finger at the audience, so when in 1988 BBC2 invited Judith Williamson to give a season of film noir historical context and feminist critique, they dressed her up in 40s frocks. This led to a confusion of noir archetypes – Williamson was costumed as the spiderwoman *femme fatale* but chatted as quickly as the wisecracking stenographer – and you can't be Rita Hayworth and Eve Arden. It was a brave attempt, though perhaps a less fussy approach would have been preferable, such as Channel 4's idea, some years earlier, of broadcasting some of its more controversial acquisitions fronted by David Robinson. Here were the films that had scandalised the tabloids ("Channel 4 Gay Sex Shocker" was how the *Daily Star* greeted the proposed transmission of *Sebastiane*) presented with avuncular gravitas by the film critic of the *Times* – so they weren't filth after all, but art.

## Cinema's best friend

The BBC 100 is, like any attempt at canon-construction, deeply flawed and ripe for challenging. Its selections from recent years curiously avoid popular tastes – surely a list which contains crowd-pleasers like *North by Northwest* and *The Sound of Music* could find room for a Spielberg somewhere – and to have only one British film from the past 25 years strikes me as an excessive display of internationalism



Home delivery: 'Do the Right Thing'

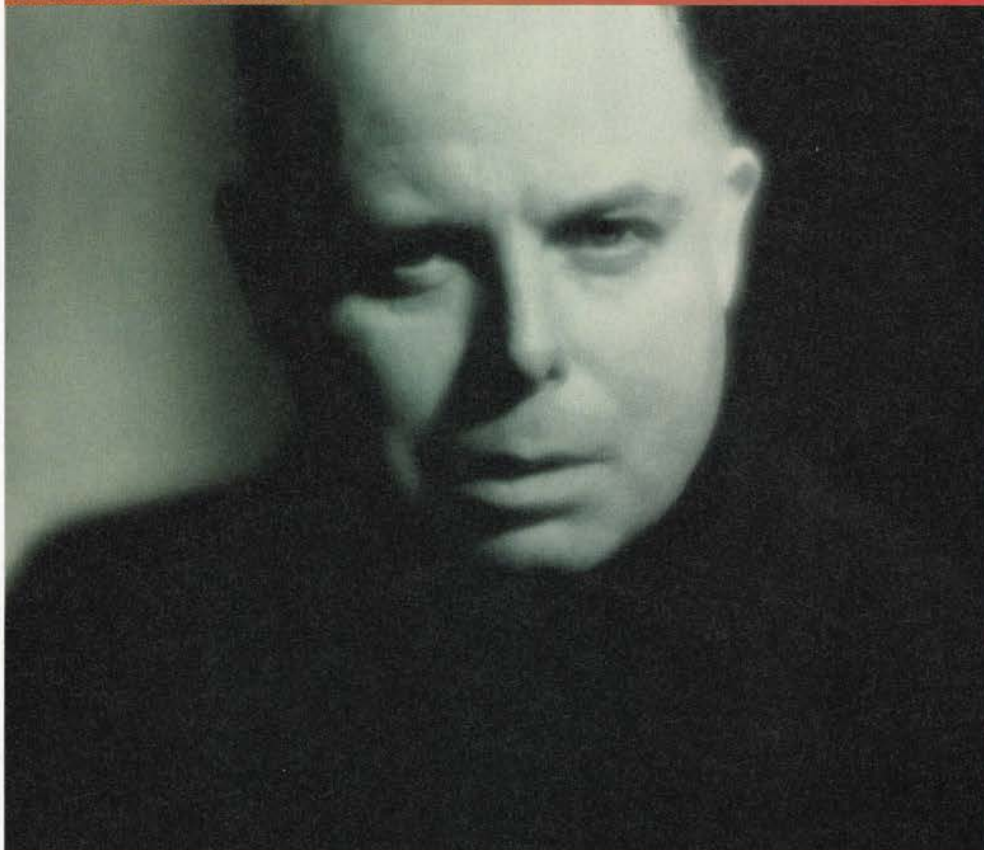
(or were all the suitable candidates from *Film on Four*?). Descending, as any such list deliciously invites us to do, to the level of purely personal taste, I'm mortified by the absence of Barbara Stanwyck and Clint Eastwood, while the inclusion of *The Nutty Professor* can only be a curious ploy to increase ITV viewing figures.

Everyone reading this could make similar criticisms, but given the enormity and sheer folly of compiling a ton of titles, the BBC list isn't half bad. Its 30s and 40s selection can't be faulted, its touchstones of canonical art cinema are only to be expected, and its recent choices show bold gambles in claiming left-field titles like *Down by Law* and *Sweetie* as potential future classics and admirable political initiatives in taking care to include female directors and black cinema. Some might lament the absence of anything that could be labelled avant-garde (and yes, it might be a wacky situationist prank to show *Wavelength* right after *The Antiques Roadshow*), but the history of the cinema is, to all but the most tedious kind of armchair anarchist, the history of feature films, and the list properly reflects this.

Inevitably there are films that will lose their full cinematic impact thanks to small-screen confinement (*Ran* will look like a particularly murky and malicious game of rugby league), but such formalist niceties can't detract from the fact that the emotional, psychological, moral and visceral impact of great films will win through, whatever technology delivers them. Somewhere out there somebody is going to see *Gun Crazy* or *Aguirre, Wrath of God* or *Do the Right Thing* or *Vertigo* for the first time, and even if they see them on a black and white portable they're still going to find it an unforgettable, appetite-whetting, life-enhancing experience. And that, quite simply, is why television is the best friend cinema has.



INTERVIEW BY GAVIN SMITH



Between two worlds: Jean Renoir, left, whose centenary is celebrated in 1995; Julien Carette as the poacher-turned-servant Marceau in the director's masterpiece 'La Règle du jeu', opposite

# A MAN OF EXCESS

PAUL  
SCHRADER  
ON JEAN  
RENOIR

BFI STILL, POSTERS AND DESIGNS (4)







● In the middle of editing his HBO film *Witch Hunt*, a private-eye mystery set in 50s Hollywood that combines supernatural, noir and comic elements, director, screenwriter and former critic Paul Schrader took time out to talk to me about Jean Renoir and *La Règle du jeu* (*The Rules of the Game*, 1939), on the occasion of Renoir's centenary. Our conversation ranged from reflections on the historical significance of the director to an analysis of the techniques of the film, which we watched together on tape.

Schrader and Renoir may seem an unlikely match, but in fact it's the old story of an attraction of opposites. Schrader's cerebral – even academic – sensibility, with its emphasis on formal control, originates in a Calvinist upbringing that emphasised predestination, guilt and the denial of free will, and which considered art and imagery suspect. Renoir, by contrast, grew up in a liberal artistic environment, which privileged the visual and celebrated the vitality and richness of everyday life and the human appetite for experience. Schrader was not permitted to watch movies until he was at college, and his initial investment in cinema was via the metaphysical poetics and ascetic minimalism of avant-garde European film-makers such as Bresson, Antonioni and Dreyer. These led him to more liberal influences such as Godard and Bertolucci, who combined philosophical inquiry with more permissive cinematic form. Indeed, Schrader names Bertolucci's *The Conformist* as the film that made film-making seem a possibility to him, citing in particular its synthesis of intense pictorialism (think of late Renoir, father and son alike) and Godardian third-person camera style; perhaps for Schrader this was an aesthetic realisation of his own effort to unite cinema's sensory appeal and the spiritual discipline of Calvinism.

On the road to Bertolucci, Schrader was impressed by Renoir's artistic and secular-humanist values, perhaps recognising him as the godfather to post-war European art cinema. Schrader's eventual application of European art-film aesthetics to sensational Hollywood genre material would ultimately be informed by his own theoretical concerns: the life of the mind, the play of guilt and redemption. Yet Renoir represented the tantalising possibilities of a sympathetic, moral cinema of joyful extravagance, carnal humanity and material presence which would come to haunt Schrader's work. As he wrote of *Boudu sauvé des eaux* (1932): "A great artist like Renoir takes abnormal behaviour (that is, uncivilised, unpolluted and, in effect, very natural behaviour) and makes it so central to life itself, so enjoyable, and so contagious that even the most hard core establishment sycophants can identify with it."

Gavin Smith: When did you first meet Renoir?

Paul Schrader: In 1969. I was writing for the *L.A. Free Press* and I had a friend or mentor, Joel Reischer. He made a sort of career out of being a friend to the famous. He knew Lang and Huxley and Isherwood and Renoir and that whole émigré community. After I wrote an article on *Boudu sauvé des eaux*, Joel took me up to Renoir's house on Leona Drive where I met Jean and Dido. Renoir was in a pre-retirement period. He was making *Little Theatre* and was trying to get



**Taking fright:** Paulette Goddard as Lisette the maid, top; Julien Carette as Marceau, supporting the frightened house guest Charlotte (Odette Talazac), above

some films on, but he was also starting to work on the books. He liked to have people come up to the house, and for some reason he took a shine to me. I think it was almost out of perversity, because I was writing a book on Bresson at the time, *Transcendental Style*. Renoir was baffled by what I saw in Bresson because it was so against his sensibility. Renoir is a man of excess – the body language of giving and generosity – and Bresson's films are about the opposite: they're about taking away until he has taken away so much that the viewer has to start putting it in. Whenever I was up there, Renoir would wave me over and say to whoever was there, "You've got to meet this kid, he's the one who's doing the book on Bresson. Tell them about your book on Bresson." I realised after a couple of Saturdays that I was a running gag. Did you and he throw your ideas about Bresson at each other?

I threw my ideas at him, but they just bounced off. It was like trying to explain communism to Jesse Helms – you can talk and talk but it isn't going to get through. As much as I like Bresson's work, I do think *La Règle du jeu* is the consummate film. If you had to take one film to represent all of film history and put it on the spaceship, it would be this, because it has a mixture of humanism, comedy and technical innovation, all with a solid, socially meaningful basis. Relevant then, relevant now. But the thing you carry away from it is the human story. Renoir was everything a film-maker can be. I've met a number of artists who make your life bigger. When you're with them you feel as though you're in a darkened room, and as the conversation proceeds, they walk around and open the windows and more and more light comes in.

Who else has made this kind of impression on you?

Rossellini was like that. When you left the room after he'd been talking you really felt the world was bigger and that more things could be done, you were invigorated. The architect Charles Eames had a similar impact. As a young critic I met other artists I respect enormously – such as Peckinpah – but Sam wasn't that kind of man. Renoir made you feel your world was bigger because he had entered it.

I remember something Renoir said about his father and how much he disliked motion pictures and that there was nothing for him to do as a kid to get his father's approval. He said, "Lucky for me that film came along and I could do something creative that my father had nothing to do with. I could make my own creative life and get out from underneath that." The next thing he said was, "My son, on the other hand...!"

You didn't start watching films until you went to college. When did you first see *La Règle du jeu*?

At UCLA.

Did it have an immediate impact?

It was immediate, but because I was trying to reconcile my theological upbringing with my love of movies, certain artists came right out at me – Bresson, Dreyer, Ozu, Antonioni, artists who were into the spiritual predicament. Those were the first ones who made me say, "Aha, here's the connection between the way I was raised and what I am now. Here are people who



are trying to bridge that gap, trying to make sense of both worlds." It wasn't until *Boudu* that I began to fall in love with the humanist side of cinema. I had come in through the coldest, most austere door – I came in through the meat freezer. Because I was Pauline Kael's protégé, I used to send her the articles every week, and the *Boudu* article was the only one where I remember she wrote back to say, "Bravo, you did good."

*There's a point in Renoir, especially in 'The River', where his humanism is so absolute and lyrical it assumes an almost spiritual texture. How did you become familiar with the rest of his work?*

The LA County Museum did a complete retrospective and I must have seen 80 per cent of the films at that time. I particularly liked the early ones, *Le Crime de Monsieur Lange* and the Jean Gabin films. I didn't care for *La Grande Illusion*, I found that schematic. I find all the so-called touches forced, contrived, as opposed to the spontaneity of the other films, where he really put life in a bottle. I think one of the reasons *La Grande Illusion* is so revered is that it is a simplistic film. I don't think it holds up. I was teaching at Columbia University a couple of years ago and I asked the students to bring in something they thought was well made. A student brought in *La Grande Illusion*, and as we watched it, I said, "Look at it, it's not really well made. It's obvious, you can see the buttons it's going to hit before it hits them" – as opposed to *La Règle du jeu*, where buttons are being pressed all over the place and sometimes you're not even aware they've been pressed until after you've had the emotion. It's like those doors flying open in the château – you never know what's going to come at you and what characters you'll grow to like or dislike. Probably Renoir's most unique gift is his ability to take a character and show his reputable and disreputable sides with equal honesty and not condemn him.

*I think that comes from the fact that he worked very intimately with his cast. As with Cassavetes, if a director is of a generous disposition, his emotional commitment and admiration for his actors is transferred to the characters they play.*

One of the great marks of Renoir's genius is that he approached film as an actor. He was an actor himself and he could get out there and do the roles. On top of that was his ability to have an intellectual depth of field – and then to see what images can do as opposed to what performances can do, how a camera move is also a performance. Directors who are part of the cast in their mentality are often not part of the camera crew.

*As early as 'Boudu', Renoir mastered a very modern way for the camera to move through and reveal space – for instance, those lateral tracking shots linking adjacent but distinct spaces.*

Godard took that to its limit. I think it's in *Deux ou trois choses que je sais d'elle*, in a restaurant, where he's on his actors, then he pans out of the window and watches for a while, then pans back. Renoir was very good at that too.

It also has a lot to do with technology, a subject that is often skipped over in film theory. The moment you got rid of parallax you had a huge jump in the director's control, because then he or she could see when something was

out of focus. The same when sound became portable, and then when the advent of the KEM flatbed enabled the director to be the editor; the advent of video-assist has now made the director the camera operator. The director sees the shot, the move, as it comes down; the director sits there in front of a monitor. If the monitor has playback, the director can go back, look at it again and choose the match. Back then it was much more risky to go out and do things that may not cut together. You didn't know what they would look like because the operator was looking at it at an angle, not looking through the lens, and you had to take the operator's word for what he was seeing. And you had to take the assistant's word for whether it was going out of focus or not and the assistant wouldn't really know because he would be doing it on a calibrator. The famous shot in *Stagecoach* where the camera dollies up to John Wayne and goes soft in the middle of the shot – there was no way they could know that when they were shooting that shot. People who moved the camera in the early days had to have a much stronger vision of what the camera was doing. Directors are able to do a lot more with the camera these days with a lot less experience. Directors such as Renoir and Welles were out there imagining things they had no proof would work other than in their mind's eye.

It's a thorny subject, but is it that we don't have Renoirs today because we just don't have Renoirs, or is it because the whole nature of society has changed? And if we had a Renoir, what would he or she be like? I agree with George Lucas that in 20 years we will look back at the way we make films now with a sort of nostalgia – for the days when there was transportation and electricity and wardrobe. I'm of the opinion that film is 100 years old, it's the art form of the century and it's running its course. *One reason why Renoir may not be as influential on contemporary film-makers is that he isn't sexy or immediate in the way of Welles, Hitchcock, Godard or Peckinpah. Godard points out in the second two instalments of 'Histoire(s) du cinéma' that there's too much film history for today's generation to come to terms with and define themselves within, whereas the nouvelle vague were perfectly positioned historically, 50 years after cinema began.*

In many ways Renoir's was a nineteenth-century sensibility in a twentieth-century art form.

**One of the great marks of Renoir's genius is that he approached film as an actor**

While he was making these humanist films, his more avant-garde contemporaries in France were forging the existentialist hero, and I don't think he had much sympathy with that. Now I think we're at the point where just as Renoir's hero ran its course years ago, the twentieth-century existentialist hero that came after it has run its course too. The existentialist hero was born of cynicism and died of irony. Now we're in an almost post-cynical era where everything is ironic, recycled and non-contextual. It's a very difficult time to be an artist.

*If you read the film criticism of the 50s and 60s, the term 'anti-hero' was widespread. Now it's a given and therefore obsolete – name a genre hero who isn't either an anti-hero or an ironised hero construct like Indiana Jones.*

The anti-hero was someone who didn't have heroic qualities but had a heroic soul, so here was Bresson's *Pickpocket*. Now even he is seen as a sentimental creation, and we're into the Quentin Tarantino hero, who is just another ingredient in our Cuisinart culture, where you throw everything in the blender and turn it on. *Yet what Renoir, for all his warmth, shares with Tarantino is that he maintains a certain detachment, he doesn't implicate the viewer through identification with any one character's point of view.*

I think that's just the humanist point of view – a moment-to-moment non-judgmental quality, though in the end the judgment is made on society, not on the individuals. That's also a very nineteenth-century thing – Stendahl, Flaubert. There's an argument to be made that in the first half-century of cinema, all they did was translate nineteenth-century stories into a twentieth-century medium and that the dramaturgy of motion pictures didn't change until the *nouvelle vague*, when the idea of the well-made play and the arc and fall of a character seemed too contrived. Renoir was using the objectivity of this twentieth-century medium to breathe new life into Victorian drama. And maybe that's why *La Règle du jeu* is such a masterpiece – it's right there on the cusp, an old story with a brand new way of storytelling.

*If you look at the first and last shots of the film, that sense is right there. The first image is of a live radio transmitter and the opening scene concerns a transatlantic flight. Then the film ends with the shadows of the upper classes moving across an outside wall as they go back inside the château. It begins with the ultra-contemporary and ends in the eighteenth or nineteenth century.*

There's the sense that the old order has come to a close, mixed with the moral relativism of the characters' individual passions, the bedroom-comedy aspect of it. The image is really quite devastating because it's a big canvas. Usually when you have stories that seem hopeless, they're relatively small-canvas stories – a character tries to do good in this world and nothing comes of it; *I Am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang*, what do I do? I steal. To do that on a big canvas is quite devastating.

One of the things that distinguishes contemporary film-making from classical film-making is that audiences today want an incessant flow of new visual information. That old technique of the master shot and coverage back and forth, back and forth is basically a stage idea that ►



◀ film got away from for a while until the influence of television brought it back again. What separates film-makers of my generation from those before is that one of the things we try to do is to make every cut a new cut so you're constantly moving forward. Unless you have a scene where it's important that you go back and forth, you want to get away from the talking heads thing. So every shot is a new set-up. The whole notion of matching or continuity is contingent on a master shot. You establish your scene in the master and then everything has to match it. But in the opening shot of *La Règle du jeu*, you start with a close-up, it comes over to a single, then we're working our way through the crowd in a simulation of hand-held camera newsreel footage.

*The images are chaotic and unstructured, in contrast to the more formal, ordered style of the rest of the film, another way of offsetting the contemporary world and the anachronistic, backward-looking world of the characters.*

Then the shot introducing André [Roland Toutain] in the cockpit is just like the first one, a close-up that becomes two or three different shots. Welles was doing this at the same time, taking one set-up and making it a single, an insert, an over-the-shoulder, a crowd scene, doing it through the choreography rather than through the editing.

Look at the second scene in Christine's boudoir – there's no master. It's shot cut-to-cut. Conventionally, it would have been a master and coverage. But at some point in the editing they decided to intercut to keep the first scene alive. Probably in the script it was the airport scene and then the boudoir scene. So they pan up from the radio; Christine [Nora Grégor] comes forward, switches it off and goes back and sits down; we cut back to the airport; next, the wide shot of Christine sitting at her dressing table, which would theoretically be the master, but it isn't because you don't see the face of the protagonist. And he hasn't used the same angle twice in the film up to this point. We cut to the maid Lisette [Paulette Dubost] walking into the foreground and then back; and then Renoir reveals Christine in a two-shot, and then she gets up. There are no repeat cuts. It has an enormous validity because you don't know what's coming next, you're just going from one thing to the next to the next.

What this tells me is that this is all rehearsed, and at some point he said, "Here are the cuts." Eventually he's going to end up in conventional back-and-forth coverage, but he starts the film with this kind of fluidity. One of the ways you do this is to keep the characters on their feet, you keep them moving and then you just shoot the cuts. That's what makes this film look so modern. If you shot this sequence this way today, it would be considered stylistically *au courant*, which is saying something for a movie that's more than 50 years old. And it's a very time-consuming way to shoot, particularly in those days. Every time you do a new set-up it requires a new lighting break. You can't just pop lights around.

*Do you think he was aware of what he was doing?*

He was absolutely aware of it. When you shoot this way, your goal is to cut this way, although

often in editing you realise that it's better storytelling to punch in. The first repeat cut in the film is in the scene where Octave [Renoir] and André argue after the car crash, 16 minutes in. The characters don't move, he's stuck and he has to go back. [In fact on a later viewing we find there doesn't appear to be a repeat cut even here. Certain shots from the same basic angle are repeated but at different ranges from the subjects.] The only reason for it is that he has two characters who have their feet planted for two or three pages. That's why nobody gets to sit down in one spot for long in most of the film.

In *Witch Hunt* there's a scene where Dennis Hopper and several others look around a house for evidence. I shot it cut-to-cut. We rehearsed it, I called out the cuts and I cut it on the set, and that's the way it cuts in the film. The nice thing is that it's fluid. But what you don't get is the ability to shorten it; you're time-locked and you don't get back-and-forth close-ups. That's the trade-off. When you have four characters exploring a space it's ideal, but it's risky because you limit your options. In *La Règle du jeu*, once you get into it, that's how you do everything and you live with it.

Another example of something you'd do today that they didn't do then is in the scene at Geneviève's [Mila Parély's] house, where they're playing cards: move the camera ahead of the character and then let the character catch you up. Renoir uses Geneviève's move to carry you into the next room. The move is motivated by the character but is not driven by her. If it was, he'd stay with her, but instead he's jumping ahead and letting her come back in.

Then in the next scene when Robert [Marcel Dalio] visits Geneviève, Renoir starts out on a two-shot and dollies back to a wide shot rather than starting out on an establishing shot and cutting in, which is the way a more conventional film-maker would do it. That keeps him from having to do an establishing shot. The dolly back establishes the room. And again there are no repeat shots – in the dialogue between Geneviève and Robert, when he cuts back and forth the shots get tighter. There's all this theatre staging, but usually when they shoot theatre they try to lock it down rather than moving it around. He may have done an establishing master on all that, but I don't see it. That one shot where he pulled back, he prob-

**Fluid editing is about getting the actors' movements to force the cuts, so they don't seem arbitrary**

ably stayed there and shot a master, if only because once you do that, it's hard to say "cut". But in his head he knew he'd never be back there again.

In the scene where Octave visits Christine and asks her to invite André to the château, there's a cut that they always tell you you can't do when you're shooting. Lisette goes to the window and turns to look back to Octave and Christine, and it cuts on Lisette's eyeline to the other side of the door.

*Her look motivates the cut?*

Renoir is cutting on her eyeline back into a new axis.

*So he finessees an axis break?*

He wants to get on the other side of Octave and Christine. The easiest way to do that is to cut inside and then cut out, but it's not the most innovative. What Renoir does here is to dash over to Lisette and use her look to bring us back on the other side of them. And then later in the scene he uses her to change axis again.

*He's using a third character to reconfigure the spatial relationship between the other two.*

In the kitchen scene where the servants are having dinner, he uses someone outside the table – the Chef, then Marceau the poacher-turned-servant [Julien Carette] – to bring us back to the table rather than getting saddled inside the coverage. He's constantly using people who are coming to the table. The only time he really comes in purely on a cut is when Lisette and Corneille [Eddy Debray] talk about their former employer and then one of the servants points out that the Count's real name is Rosenthal, clearly an important story point. He comes in and makes sure you get that.

*He also uses incidental stuff to motivate cuts – twice people are asked to pass the mustard and that action prompts a cut, getting him out of a shot in an unobtrusive way.*

The long hallway scene is even more liberated than I remembered – the courage to move away from a character, back pans, things like that. With so many people, how do you shoot that kind of situation? You have your actors blocked like crazy and you keep leading them off and going with them and coming back with someone else. You can't cover this stuff. But the very fact that he can't cover it means he doesn't feel obliged to. He has a group shot and instead of cutting in for a close-up, he moves people out, moves in to a two-shot, pans with one of the characters to bring you to something else. Very similar to the stuff Welles was doing. Then when he does settle down for a conversation between Lisette and Christine, it's such a relief you pay attention to it. That's part of what makes the pacing work – you have to stop every now and then and lock down for a moment.

*There's a real interplay between busy and static action. A lot of the film happens in long sections of real time, without time compression or deletion.*

It places you as a viewer completely at the director's mercy because you have no idea where a character is going to take you. He doesn't have his characters walk up into close-ups the way we would today, and which Welles was able to do. The equipment wasn't good enough to pull focus that critically. But if you take any of the \$50 million films that are out right now – *The*





A very modern fluidity: Christine sits at her dressing table and Lisette walks into a wide shot, which includes her reflected image (1). Lisette turns and leaves the frame. Cut to a long shot over Christine's left shoulder. Lisette walks towards the camera into medium shot (2). She collects a lipstick from a surface in the foreground, turns and walks back to hand it to Christine, then stands behind her (3). Cut to a two-shot from behind the

table (4). Cut to a medium shot as Christine rises from the table (5). The camera pans right as she moves to the centre of the room. Here Lisette drapes Christine's coat over her shoulders (6). The camera pans left as Christine walks away into middle distance towards the door. She stops. Cut to a close-up of Christine as she half-turns towards Lisette and delivers her final question (7). Cut to a close-up of Lisette as she replies.



Client, *Clear and Present Danger*, any of them – they're not a fraction as innovative in terms of keeping scenes alive and action and movement of characters.

Obviously Renoir took his inspiration from *The Marriage of Figaro*, where people are constantly moving and your eye is constantly moving. One of the secrets of fluid editing is to get the actors' movements to force the cuts, so they don't seem arbitrary. In the scene between Robert and Octave where Octave persuades Robert to invite André to the château, there's a proscenium wide-shot of the two of them. Renoir is now in a situation where visually he doesn't want to be here any more, the shot is dying. But he also has you interested in what's going on over here in the frame.

*Marcel Dalio's bit of business with the vitrola.*

Yes. So he's forcing the cut to what you want to see, a much smoother cut than just going in. It contributes to the film's dance-of-life feeling. At any moment someone is going to walk in or out of the room. Of course, life is nothing like this. People don't move around this much.

*Do you think Altman is in this tradition?*

I think Altman's reference point in shooting is multi-camera television, and then applying that to sound as well.

*Which is how Renoir shot 'Le Testament du Docteur Cordelier' – he used eight cameras in some set-ups.*

It suffers for it too. There's no room for a second camera in cut-to-cut. Multi-camera set-ups have hurt as many films as the zoom did. Altman is the only other director to have attempted this kind of roundelay, but he lacks the two most interesting things you find in Renoir. One is the humanism. Altman doesn't care much for his characters, he's superior to them. He's at his best when he has characters who are sleazy to begin with. When he deals with regular people, his condescension comes through. The second thing is that Altman doesn't have Renoir's dance-of-life fluidity, he doesn't have a feeling for that. You have a sense in *La Règle du jeu* that one person is leading you through this labyrinthine world and that you are getting a single consistent vision rather than a pastiche. Altman has that pastiche feeling. With Renoir, you feel that the director wants you to be here, now. That it only appears random, and in fact you are in the hands of a very stern moral tour guide with an overall plan that he is allowing you to find out about as it goes along. It's fair to say that this is somewhat atypical of Renoir – it's his masterpiece, but it's full of a kind of freedom you don't see in all his films.

Few film-makers today have the stylistic confidence to do something like this. You really have to be secure with the story you're telling and the relationships you're showing. You're taking irrevocable decisions and assuming that these relationships are going to work out without conventional coverage. If you were not a major film-maker and you put these kind of dailies into a studio, you would get a screaming phone call. "Where are the close-ups? Where's the coverage? How are people going to know what to feel?"

*A Renoir season, including a two-part 'Omnibus', will be screened by the BBC in early 1995. 'La Règle du Jeu' is available on Connoisseur Video*



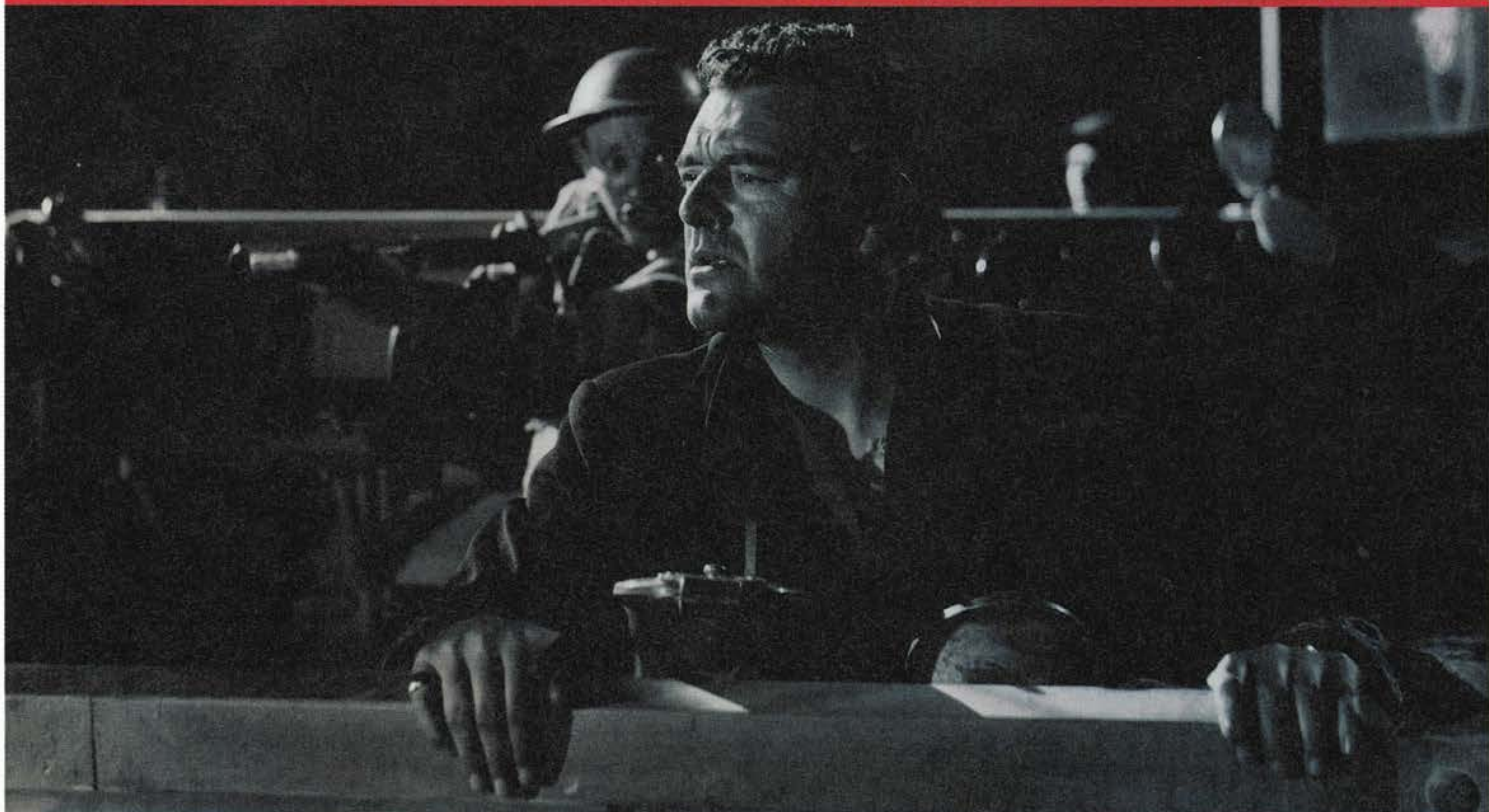
BY LEN DEIGHTON

# SAND AND SEA

'Lawrence of Arabia' and 'The Cruel Sea' conjure up two versions of the British film industry: one devoted to international production, the other to modest indigenous films. Which road should we be pursuing?



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● Asked to name the greatest film ever made, a large number of people will immediately nominate *Lawrence of Arabia* – that truly remarkable epic which brought plaudits from audiences who were using ‘epic’ as a term of abuse. It began as an idea in the mind of Sam Spiegel, whose *On the Waterfront* had won eight Oscars and *The Bridge on the River Kwai* seven – as would eventually *Lawrence of Arabia*. It was Spiegel who obtained the rights, nursed the project through trials and tribulations, sought out the astounding array of talent that appeared in it, and, most difficult of all, obtained the money to make it.

The glamorous, enigmatic and controversial career of T. E. Lawrence was widely known and cinematic enough to have attracted the attention of many other film-makers. Here was Rudolph Valentino, updated, in colour and with a real desert to gallop through.

Curiously, the Lawrence legend began with a film. When the war ended he was unknown: the *Times History of the War* made no mention of him. It was a short piece of wartime documentary footage that started the ball rolling. When the *New York Globe* sponsored some lectures by Lowell Thomas, an American war correspondent who filmed the Arabian campaign, it was Lawrence who got most of the glory. Thomas took his film show to London and the whole of the British establishment threw its weight behind this romantic tribute to one of its countrymen. The prime minister (David Lloyd George), Rudyard Kipling, George Bernard Shaw, young Winston Churchill, an assortment of generals and royals, and the band of the Welsh Guards crowded into the plush setting of the Royal Opera House to join in the adulation.

### Lies and poetry

A book of the film inevitably followed. Lawrence spent several years laboriously writing and then supervising the illustrations and production of a luxury edition relating his wartime experiences leading a revolt of desert Arabs against their Turkish rulers. Fewer than 200 copies were printed and they were sold for 30 guineas each – about 100 times the current cost of a novel. *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom* was not reliable history. Some said it was lies, some said it was poetry; in fact, it was a heady mixture of both.

Lawrence protested against the almost universal praise lavished on him by all sections of society, while always, as Lowell Thomas put it, “backing into the limelight”. The war had left him mentally unbalanced and determined upon self-abasement. As part of the degradation, he joined the ranks of the peacetime air force.

In 1926, having joined the RAF and the army under assumed names to get away from publicity (and written to the editor of the *Daily Express* to tell him about it), the erratic Lawrence accompanied his literary agent Raymond Savage to meet film producer Herbert Wilcox with the suggestion that his forthcoming book would make an “outstanding film”. Wilcox had never heard of Lawrence, but having had the desert adventures

described to him, he turned it down as “not good cinema and in spots rather sordid”.

Literary agents do not give up easily, however, and by 1934 Alexander Korda was taken with the idea of using *Revolt in the Desert* – an edited, less personal version of *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom* produced by Lawrence to recoup his debts on the luxury title – as the basis for a film. To write the screenplay, he selected Basil Liddell-Hart, a friend and biographer of Lawrence. Asked what he thought of the idea of Leslie Howard starring in a film directed by Lewis Milestone, Lawrence said he approved. But at the same time he was telling his lawyers and trustees that he didn’t like the idea and hoped it would never come about. He was also naming actors who would be better able to portray him on the screen. The exasperated Savage suggested that Korda buy the film rights of Liddell-Hart’s biography and thus by-pass Lawrence and his trustees (and Lawrence’s brother, Professor A. W. Lawrence, who was particularly difficult to satisfy). When Lawrence heard about this he changed his mind again and even offered to help Liddell-Hart with the screenplay.

While the negotiations continued, Lawrence was killed riding the powerful Brough motorcycle which he claimed was his one and only pleasure. The trustees, legally bound to maximise his estate on behalf of the charities to whom he had assigned his royalties, adopted a more commercial attitude. *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom* became a ‘Book of the Month Club’ main selection and Korda was given the go-ahead. But cash shortages compelled Korda to sell and then buy back the project, which delayed the start to 1937 and beyond. In addition, British officialdom did not want the film made and knew how to go about preventing it. A “most confidential” memo reported that: “Mr K, in spite of his protestations about such things, looked forward to a knighthood, possibly in the forthcoming New Year list. If it could be made clear that no knighthood would be forthcoming unless it were understood that the film of *Revolt in the Desert* – or any other film made by him about Lawrence – were so adapted as to be entirely inoffensive to the Turks...” Sir Robert Vansittart, the Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office and Lawrence’s second cousin, found this way of resolving the problem somewhat alarming: “I deprecate any idea of buying him off with a knighthood – if this were done, he need only threaten to produce embarrassing pictures to obtain eventually, a dukedom.”

The British government was determined that no offence should be given to the Turks, and there seemed to be no way of making a film about Lawrence without doing so. At first Korda appeared undeterred. In that somewhat casual manner of British film-making at the time, his crew shooting *The Four Feathers* on location in Egypt and Sudan was asked to stay on and shoot some exteriors for a forthcoming film about Lawrence using John Clements (who was in *The Four Feathers*) as the hero. By this time Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer and Universal had both registered the title ‘Lawrence of Arabia’, but to go ahead on such a project without legally assigned rights was to invite litigation. Then Paramount artfully jumped in ahead and bought everything Korda

had prepared. With the prospect of a European war that would make overseas filming virtually impossible, Korda probably found the choice between cash in hand and a battle with Whitehall mandarins an easy one to make. War came, Korda left for Hollywood, and Lawrence went back on the shelf.

In the 60s, my film production offices in Piccadilly were ones that Korda – or Sir Alexander Korda, as he later became – had once occupied. I got used to the way my visitors would look around expectantly and then relate some incident or conversation they’d had with Korda in this room. I began to collect Korda stories; I wish I could remember more of them. My favourite came from his equally famous nephew. Noticing the attention his uncle was given at the Savoy Hotel, despite the fact that he owed the management tens of thousands of pounds, Michael asked how that came about. “Always tip in cash,” explained Alexander Korda.

### Cutting out the actors

When the Second World War ended, the Lawrence project was revived by the experienced producer Anatole de Grunwald, who persuaded Terence Rattigan to write a screenplay based on the Liddell-Hart biography. Pre-production got to the point of having Dirk Bogarde fitted with costumes and a blonde wig before the J. Arthur Rank accountants pointed out that the movie’s estimated cost of nearly three-quarters of a million pounds was far beyond their resources.

In 1959, to the astonishment of all those film-makers who had reeled away exhausted by negotiations with the Lawrence trustees, Sam Spiegel announced that he had bought the film rights to *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom* – the poetic literary work of which Lawrence was so proud. Spiegel believed the script to be so vital to any film that he would spend months or even years preparing one. He was said to be the most persuasive man in the industry, and as he had recently scooped up armfuls of Oscars for *The Bridge on the River Kwai*, a project Korda had turned down, the film world all wanted to hear how he had ‘achieved the impossible’ in securing the rights from people who were notoriously reluctant to sell. Harry Saltzman told me that Spiegel simply said to Professor A. W. Lawrence – the literary executor who had appointed himself guardian of the legend – that he was so sure that this film would please the trustees, that should it fail to do so, they could withdraw his right to use the title. Harry laughed his infectious laugh as he related this and I joined in without understanding the joke. Seeing the perplexed look on my face, Harry said: “Can you imagine the title *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom* above a marquee in Omaha?” Certainly Spiegel had no intention of calling his epic anything other than *Lawrence of Arabia*. When the film was finished, Professor Lawrence hated it and duly withdrew his permission to use the title *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*. Had he visited any of the location sites during filming, he would have noticed that the ‘No Admission’ notices said you would need written entry permits from Horizon Pictures’ *Lawrence of Arabia* production office. The title had been abandoned from the start.

There are more anecdotes about *Lawrence of Arabia* than about any other film I know. Alec ►

**Men at war: Peter O'Toole (left) as T. E. Lawrence, a man caught between his own English culture and that of the Arabs, in David Lean's epic film 'Lawrence of Arabia', opposite top; Jack Hawkins, fighting the elements and his own pain in Charles Frenn's 'The Cruel Sea', opposite bottom**



◀ Guinness contributed some of the most telling ones. Guinness and director David Lean had never become close friends, despite the way Lean's *Great Expectations* in 1946 had given Guinness his first big chance. Arriving in Ceylon to begin his memorable role as Colonel Nicholson in *The Bridge on the River Kwai*, the actor had been greeted by Lean telling him that he had failed to get Charles Laughton (only because of medical insurance) and Noël Coward. Neither did Guinness relish Lean's ideas of how the British colonel should be played. The director wanted him to be someone who would be boring to meet. Guinness was horrified – Spiegel had persuaded him to take the part by telling him to bring out the humour of the Nicholson role. And now Guinness had been invited at Spiegel's insistence to play Emir Feisal, but Lean didn't want him in his film and the role of the Arab prince was beyond even the amazing skills of Guinness.

"Actors hate me," said Lean. Since the delicate exchanges of *Brief Encounter*, a barrier had arisen between him and his actors, something which made him reluctant to try to explore the emotions of his characters. No matter. Fine dialogue and subtle interactions between characters don't win big awards. And divine intervention, or perhaps that of Spiegel, ensured that Robert Bolt, whose reputation rested largely on *A Man for All Seasons*, now gave Lean a version of *Lawrence of Arabia* that used dialogue for little more than cryptic exchanges that could be used to weld together the stunning extravaganza of landscapes with which Lean was obsessed.

Lean had lost his respect for actors. His attitude was that if an actor could not do as the director wanted, he should be replaced by someone who could. It was not a paradox that he seemed to derive more pleasure from coaching members of the crew to take minor roles than he did from directing stars. Lean was essentially an editor – or a "cutter" as he preferred to call them. Trevor Howard's joke, that having finished shooting a sequence Lean couldn't wait to get into the editing room and start cutting the actors out of it, was not without a grain of truth, which is why the joke prevailed. But it was Lean's editing skills that enabled him to organise the film in his brain. What director other than Lean could have shot the film in the desert without seeing any daily rushes for months? What other director could have coped with the logistics at the location and directed the film while the scriptwriter was still drafting the end of the screenplay and the editor cutting the beginning?

#### Marlon Brando or Stanley Laurel?

Lawrence was revered at the time of the film's release, despite a critical biography by Richard Aldington and newspaper revelations of his sexual activities. These had shocked his countrymen more than had his own account of the appalling atrocities his Arab irregulars had committed on prisoners and Turkish wounded. This all produced an atmosphere which no doubt helped sell tickets. Winston Churchill's admiration for Lawrence was unstinting: he thought him one of the greatest men of the century. Lean's view was more prosaic. "I love nuts," said Lean. "Lawrence was a nut: a university don on a camel."

But making a biopic, even a biopic of a nut,

is a frustrating venture. The scriptwriter is deprived of so many important ingredients of story-telling. To depict a whole lifetime, he or she must begin with characters – such as parents and teachers – who will disappear from the story and never return. A filmed biography presents other problems. Even the finest make-up experts cannot make a young actor look old, still less can they make an older actor look young.

Some of the problems can be avoided by making a story from only one vital episode of a life, and this is what Lean did. He filmed only the high point of Lawrence's life, and used Freddie Young to shoot the desert in all its moods. Lean, like every other biopic-maker before and after him, clearly decided that history must be ruthlessly bent to his will. Subordinate characters were given invented lives, combined with the lives of others or eliminated altogether, sometimes by means of such comic-strip devices as sinking sands. His casting of Lawrence was as cavalier as his treatment of history, as any comparison of photographs of star and soldier reveals. The only Hollywood star who looked anything like Lawrence was Stan Laurel.

Meanwhile, Rattigan had taken the screenplay he had prepared for the abandoned De Grunwald film and used it as the basis for a play, *Ross* (one of Lawrence's assumed names). Spiegel persuaded Professor Lawrence to help him stop the stage-play by appealing to the powers of censorship that allowed the Lord Chamberlain to prevent deceased individuals from being portrayed on stage if their relatives objected. But Rattigan was as smart as Spiegel. He bought the film rights of the Liddell-Hart biography, to prevent anyone saying he was infringing on Spiegel's rights, and threatened to take his play to television, where the Lord Chamberlain's powers did not prevail. Then Herbert Wilcox, who had turned down the Lawrence story so many years earlier, armed himself with the *Ross* screen rights and those of the Liddell-Hart biography to start a film of his own. But as has often happened before and since, the money-men were frightened off by the threat of litigation and soon only the Spiegel film remained.

Ross opened in May 1960 and Guinness created a wonderful Lawrence on the stage of the Theatre Royal. The staging and scenery were simple and superb. I remember it vividly: Guinness, cocky and abrasive, had used a description provided by someone who had seen Lawrence frequently at his cottage at Cloud's Hill in Dorset – "I can see him right now as he was 30 years ago, walking like a duck, toes turned out, his arms stiff at his side, straight down the middle of the road in the dusk of a summer night." Lawrence's brother thought Guinness well suited to play the role and Liddell-Hart said he was "more capable" than any of the others. But Lean decided Guinness was too old, and Guinness was inclined to agree.

When Spiegel first revealed his planned film, Marlon Brando was to play Lawrence. "Will it be a speaking part?" asked some sardonic voice from the back of the room. The unknown questioner was not alone in finding it an unhappy choice. Weren't there any British actors? It was bad enough having Brando already cast in *Mutiny on the Bounty*. When Lawrence's brother joined the outcry, the idea of casting Brando was dropped.

There were other actors. "Finney worked four days, then quit," said Lean. "He told me he wasn't interested in becoming a star." Richard Burton was shortlisted. "He would have been marvellous," said Lean, and added, "Montgomery Clift used to ring me weekly in Madrid... begging to play Lawrence." Dirk Bogarde said that so many actors had been asked to play Lawrence he was thinking of forming a club for them.

The chances of Peter O'Toole, a little-known actor at the time, getting the part seemed slim. In a screen test for *Suddenly Last Summer* he had been asked to improvise a doctor's role, and had turned to the camera saying: "It's all right Mrs Spiegel, your son will never play the violin again" – a joke that caused Spiegel to become incandescent with rage, according to a biographer. Apart from being someone Spiegel said he would never work with, O'Toole was 11 inches too tall and far too handsome for the Lawrence part. But he worked hard, and remained with the production almost as long as Lean and the crew. It is probably the longest speaking part in the history of cinema. Perhaps in some mysterious way, O'Toole depicted the epic hero Lawrence wished to be. And the hero the moviegoer wanted him to be.

#### Pathetic and disturbed hero

*Lawrence of Arabia* had its world premiere in London before the Queen in December 1962. Like *Cleopatra* and *How the West Was Won*, it came on the heels of the epic *El Cid*. It was one of the very few films made in 70 mm Super Panavision (rather than enlarged from 35 mm), its superb optical definition an extra inducement for a public being asked to change to 'hard-ticket' shows (for which audiences booked seats for a scheduled performance) rather than continuous screenings. The completed film gave rise to more stories. When the edited version ran four hours, a further 20 minutes was cut from it and it was divided in half to provide an interval during which the audience could quench their thirst. At the premiere Tommy Steele (having grabbed a handful of sand from a fire bucket) came into the bar, pulled off a shoe, tipped the sand on to the carpet and shouted, "That damned stuff gets everywhere, doesn't it?"

*Lawrence of Arabia* set all manner of logistical records. Tankers endlessly trundled across 150 miles of empty desert bringing water, and everything else, to the isolated location at Jebel Tubeiq – perhaps the most remote spot ever used for a feature film. The large transport planes flew constantly. The property master, who usually had one assistant, needed 12. *Lawrence* is perhaps the finest biopic that will ever be made, but epics can never be great films. Large-scale production can never have the economy of means that gives the camera a chance to work its magic. The makers of silent films discovered that 50 people could step inside a sentry box which then blew to pieces – providing the camera was stopped and started at the right times. The finest films are impressionistic: fleeting brush strokes that suggest far more than is shown on the screen. An epic, on the other hand, is more akin to a meticulously painted pre-Raphaelite panorama. Making a film with umpteen million dollars worth of sets, costumes and hardware in exotic locations is more an exercise in photography and logistics than



**Charles Frend's direction depicted the grey ocean as an enemy, and took care to keep shots of it minimal and threatening**



**Cry of pain and triumph: Charles Frend's 'The Cruel Sea'**

film-making. Which is why it is Spiegel's film rather than Lean's.

Bolt was inspired in his decision to set aside all the writings about Lawrence in favour of the autobiographical *The Seven Pillars of Wisdom*. By taking only Lawrence's account of himself, Bolt was provided with enough contradictory, self-questioning behaviour to create an exotic hero. But there was nothing to suggest the pathetic and deeply disturbed personality that emerged from fuller accounts of Lawrence's life. Bolt's peerless craftsmanship enabled him to set an interesting character into a drastically simplified but easily understood historical background, without demanding too much of Lean and his actors. Lean's contribution was to know just how much story was needed to give continuity to the vast landscapes and violent action sequences he so enjoyed filming. Someone whose opinion I value, after seeing *A Man for All Seasons* on the London stage, said that Bolt could have produced a breathtaking masterpiece had he been assigned to write of Lawrence's deeply felt participation at the Peace Conference, where slippery British and French delegates conspired to cheat the Arabs of their promised land.

I agree. The true riches of a great film must come from its foundations – ideas, plot, dialogue and situation – rather than from blowing up real trains and real bridges. I can't think of *Lawrence* without comparing it with another film about men pitting themselves against the elements. Again the script came from a famous writer and was based on a junior officer's best-selling war memoir. But there the similarity ends.

**Sexually restrained patriots**

*The Cruel Sea* was shot a decade before the Lawrence film. Nicholas Monsarrat's best-selling autobiographical novel, of landlubbers called to man a small escort ship and fight a war against the U-boats in 1940, remains a British classic. And to write the script, the producer chose one of our finest authors, Eric Ambler.

Monsarrat's book is remarkable in not depending on the sort of psychopathic personalities that make *The Caine Mutiny* and *The Naked and the Dead* such compulsive reading. Neither were there any characters to compare with the legless RAF fighter pilot of *Reach for the Sky* or the US bomber group commander who suffers a nervous breakdown in *Twelve O'Clock High*. Like

*Lawrence of Arabia*, *The Cruel Sea* depicts men against the elements, but while Freddie Young's photography gave the desert a magical appeal that provided an insight into Lawrence's obsession with it, Charles Frend's direction depicted the grey ocean as an enemy, and took care to keep shots of it minimal and threatening.

Neither did *The Cruel Sea* follow the style that Noël Coward (aided by David Lean) created in his tributes to the senior service. While Lawrence had produced an overblown and unreliable history, Monsarrat had written a modest personal story; a cry of pain and triumph. *Lawrence* had an array of stars; the casting of *The Cruel Sea* took care to avoid actors who had created memorable servicemen's roles elsewhere. The film follows the book's somewhat shapeless plot: characters come and go and even the ship lasts only half way through the story. No sooner has the first officer, Stanley Baker, established himself as a thoroughly obnoxious character than he disappears and is never seen again. From now on the major characters share their cramped wardroom in a congenial atmosphere – and believe me, that is a plot situation that would give any writer a nervous breakdown.

The Royal Navy prided itself on being "the silent service" – brave, taciturn and understated compared with the anything-goes atmosphere of our lives today. And a truthful representation of the early 40s demanded sexually restrained patriots who never revealed their innermost feelings. So where is the conflict? Where is the confrontation? The appearance of the enemy is so fleeting that an extra sip of cocoa while viewing will deprive you of even that glimpse of the U-boat and the German seaman.

Those who believe that the principal task of the director is to prevent actors from over-acting will not be disappointed by Charles Frend's tight grip on the filming. It can be seen when skipper Jack Hawkins sheds a solitary tear, having chosen to kill his own men struggling in the water rather than let an enemy submarine escape; no consolation comes from his first officer (Donald Sinden), who clearly believes that the men have been sacrificed because of the captain's miscalculation.

Sinden never slips into the clichéd 'buddy' role that sends so many war films down the slippery sentimental slope. His romance with Virginia McKenna might be called tepid, but Denholm Elliott's unfaithful wife, played by Moira Lister, has a heart-wrenching effect on the plot. Elliott, the cuckolded husband, is armed with some of the best lines: "Something else? It's hardly becoming that when your first officer is suffering acute pain that you can be smiling at something else."

*The Cruel Sea*, book and film, stir the emotions in a way no epic ever could. While few moviegoers had ever met *Lawrence of Arabia*, they all knew some bank clerk or milkman who had gone off to man a warship equipped with no more than pluck, purpose and patriotism. The film's version of Lawrence – a sexually ambivalent sado-masochist cavorting in flamboyant embroidered robes in a shamelessly exaggerated version of his own achievements – does not produce for me the powerful drama that I find in the struggles of an amiable milkman-turned-radar-

operator as he drowns alone and lost in the oil-covered Atlantic.

In the light of the grim reality behind the story of *The Cruel Sea*, the model ships in the tiny water tank at Ealing are an acceptable backdrop, as are the flashing lights in the darkness that replace long convoys of merchantmen and escorts. The skill Ambler brings to keeping the action largely within the wardroom is masterly; the result has the sort of power that a superb stageplay gets from its unity of place. Although newsreel footage of burning tankers and sinking ships abounds in the archives, Ambler kept the use of such clips to a minimum. We seldom see any other ships, but we are always aware of their brooding off-screen presence.

**Selling cold drinks**

These two films demonstrate the dilemma that still faces the British film industry. *Lawrence of Arabia* was an international subject that could return a profit on the large investment only Hollywood is prepared to furnish. Its writer and director were British, but this was quite incidental to such a blockbuster. The flow of money into such mammoth productions brings an atmosphere in which the unit accountant's phone calls to the front office count for more than the opinions of the director. The publicity men want to see the rushes every day and ask the producer: "So what will it do in Japan?" To satisfy the accountants, the released version of *Lawrence of Arabia* was cut again, by 35 minutes, so it could be screened three times a day instead of two. And exhibitors appreciated the way showings of *Lawrence* always brought a dramatic increase in the sales of cold drinks.

Lean was similarly sliced up. In 1970, at a New York hotel after the opening of *Ryan's Daughter*, a gathering of film critics humiliated him. One of them started the attack by asking him how he came to produce this piece of shit. Other critics joined in to tell him he was "second rate" and "out of date". Devastated by this brutal treatment, Lean felt unable to make another film for 15 years. For much of the time he travelled the world making home movies of the landscape.

In the years that followed the making of *Lawrence of Arabia*, London rivalled Los Angeles as a European production base for American films. But costs spiralled in a climate where everyone talked in dollars and even devaluation of the pound sterling did little to help. Soon it was cheaper, as well as more convenient, for Americans to make their films in California. Certain sorts of films, requiring technical work, special effects and large sets, came to Britain, but year after year film-making shrivelled.

*The Cruel Sea* was a British production using a British book about a British subject with a script by a British writer. The actors were largely from the London stage. A modest production of this sort does not pay international salaries and does not have to incorporate elements familiar to American audiences, nor consider box-office receipts in Japan and Malaya, no more than do present-day film productions in France, Germany and Italy. Perhaps if Britain didn't share with Hollywood the English language, and its demand for worldwide 'product', we could still have a film industry.



# LEAN MEAN AND CRUEL

**Danny Boyle, director of the new thriller 'Shallow Grave', talks with writer Ronan Bennett about the film, Bart Simpson and the god of narrative**

● Danny Boyle doesn't like talking about "ideas" in his new film, *Shallow Grave*. He doesn't like talking about ideas in film in general because, he says, it's pompous, self-conscious and patronising to the audience. It's an interesting position, coming from a man whose early career as a director was in theatre, first with the radical Joint Stock Company, then with the Royal Court – the playwrights he has worked with include Edward Bond and Howard Barker. Most recently, Boyle has been working in television, in shows as various as *Inspector Morse* and the serial *Mr Wroe's Virgins*.

As a writer, I'm the opposite to this. I tend to start, whether it's a novel or a screenplay, with the idea I want to explore rather than the plot. In *A Man You Don't Meet Every Day* (directed by Angela Pope and screened on Channel 4 in November 1994), I wanted to look at the notion of Ireland meets England through the encounter between a working-class Irishman, Jim, and a middle-class Englishwoman, Charlotte. With *Love Lies Bleeding* (shown on BBC2 in September 1993), I was trying to tackle political violence in Ireland and suggest that, rather than being the mindless orgy of self-destruction commonly portrayed, it had specific goals: to bring the British government to the negotiating table.

Starting out with such ideas does not mean you finish with them. Deficiencies in talent and technique can take their toll. In the writing itself, things change: what appeared possible or interesting at the beginning may seem, after the first few scenes, ludicrous or redundant. The demands of narrative impose other limitations: I have always been aware of the need to keep an audience with you as you try to plant the idea of the piece, and I have never been shy of using thrills and spills to achieve this. Ideas in film are, I believe, much more fragile, more vulnerable to eclipse, than those in novels or theatre. Given the economy of film, it is never possible to answer questions, only to raise them. If you're not careful the thrills can obscure the point you're trying to make; the spills can swamp the idea (a criticism I would make of my own work).

There are obvious dangers in talking this way about one's work, as Boyle points out. You can find

yourself making claims about what you've done which are simply not true; you can end up believing your own propaganda. In the search to dignify your work with some kind of intellectual respectability, you can easily start to feel superior about the 'lowlier' aspirations of film-making – such as entertaining the audience.

It is primarily as entertainment that Boyle wants *Shallow Grave* to be seen. It is a low-budget British film – exciting, fast, witty and, in a most unBritish way, unabashed about exhibiting style. It comes over as confident and deliberately provocative. The direction is energetic, moving the narrative along with speed and economy. The design, particularly the use of strong colours, lends the film a cartoonish feel heightened both by the burlesque violence – intended, as in cartoons, to be comic rather than shocking – and by the improbable behaviour of the main characters.

The story concerns three affluent late 20-somethings (played by Kerry Fox, Christopher Eccleston and Ewan McGregor) living in a smart New Town flat in Edinburgh, who take in a lodger (Keith Allen) who soon afterwards dies in his bedroom of a drug overdose. The trio discover a suitcase full of money among the dead man's belongings. They decide to keep it and dispose of the body secretly. Then their troubles begin. As with *Blood Simple* and *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*, the audience watches illicit riches corrode the bonds of friendship and morality holding the three together.

For me, the film never escapes predictability, though Boyle says audiences so far have not guessed the ending. But the real problem I found was the freezing and cruel emptiness at the film's heart. The absence of any character to sympathise or engage with made it hard to find an emotional response as the unpleasant, greedy trio destroyed themselves and each other.

Such opinions bounce off Boyle, who seems to be saying that he has turned his back on the kind of "pompous" film and drama he used to make in favour of movies for the Bart Simpson generation. He takes criticism well. There is no trace of defensiveness. But he emphatically rejects my argument that the film lacks ideas: "You're a snob, an absolute snob."

## Ronan Bennett: How did it all start?

Danny Boyle: The script was written by John Hodge, a doctor, and worked on by Hodge and Andrew MacDonald, the film's eventual producer. At some point it found its way to David Aukin at Channel 4, who said he was interested, so they started to look for a director. They sent the script out to about 20 directors altogether, which is very much Andrew's way. A lot of people turned it down, a lot thought it was cruel and heartless. When I read it I thought it was a really exciting British script – clean and mean and truly cinematic in the way the Billy Wilder films are. I thought, I've got to do this. When I went for the audition I said it reminded me of *Blood Simple*, in its commitment to narrative and plot, which got me off on the right foot.

Then we went into Channel 4 and began to work on the script together, and I said what I would try to do, and the kind of people we would cast. It was the fast track. Channel 4 said, "If you can get the Glasgow Film Fund to give you £150,000 we'll give you £850,000, can you make it for that amount?" We said yes, and started to work out how we could make it for £1 million.

## Did that mean you had to change things, drop things?

Not at all, because John was very clear-minded about how to get a film made, and he'd written it so it could be made for virtually nothing, which is why 80 per cent of the script takes place inside the flat. He had used as few locations as possible, and those locations he had included were simple ones. The feel of the flat was a big artistic decision in the way we presented the film. We took the risk that we would try to make the film cinematic through our use of interior space rather than what is traditional, which is exterior space. So we built a frighteningly enormous set in a warehouse in Glasgow and spent the vast proportion of our budget on that element. We could have done the film like an early Polanski, using the interior as an oppressive, claustrophobic space, in a way we're fairly used to in Britain. But one of the unusual things about Edinburgh is these New Town flats – a small door leading to a universe of space. I wanted the audience to look at this big and sexy space and think, I'd like to live in that. And we opted for evocative colours rather than the neutralising, pastel shades we all tend to live in.

**You often hear writers talking about how they produce a beautiful script and then other people – the director, the producer, the script editor – get their hands on it and it goes from a work of art to something much less. My own experience of screenwriting has so far been restricted to British television and film producers – I don't know what it's like in the US – but I wouldn't hesitate to acknowledge that despite frequent points of disagreement and high tension, my scripts have benefited from that kind of collaboration. How did that process work for *Shallow Grave*?**

It worked very well. We all agreed that we would like the plot to be more



Cocky: Ewan McGregor as Alex



Neurotic: Christopher Eccleston as David



The Doctor: Kerry Fox as Juliet



complex, which is something Channel 4 was pushing for as well. They were exemplary in the way they dealt with it – they kept hitting us with good strong suggestions, but we were free to use them or not. To my mind, the script knew exactly where it was going and was heading there at 100 miles per hour, it was just a question of increasing its trajectory. John writes in a lean, exciting way – he just writes dialogue, but you can see the film immediately when you read it. I've had less than wonderful experiences with writers in the past, for which I take full responsibility. I tend to feel that what you have to do is explain to the writer beforehand what you feel about their script and if you're right, then you should work together. But if you're completely off the mark, you shouldn't be working on the project. I told them how I saw it, they thought it was right and they gave me the job. Then you can abandon your objectivity and head off on this journey together.

We worked very much as a team – it was always our desire that the three of us, Andrew, John and I, should be equally creative. So we took the same fee, the same percentage points. I found it very liberating to sacrifice some of the ego and control you expect to have as a director.

**Was sorting out the fee and the points important?**

Andrew said from the beginning that it would be equal for everybody and everybody else who came into the project at later stages. They were all

paid equivalent equals – not actual equals because they all work for different lengths of time, and obviously a cameraman is paid more than a loader, but, on a scale, it was the equivalent.

It was a very low-budget film, and we never expected it to have the kind of success it has had. It was an attempt to make an invigorating and exciting low-budget British film, which meant the narrative became the principal ingredient. The narrative was our god.

**The way you describe it implies that characterisation was much less important. Clever plot, but what about the people? One of the criticisms of British film is that it comes out of theatre, with the result that there is too much emphasis on dialogue and character. You've reversed that, haven't you?**

Not completely. As soon as you get actors on board – the characters – they become mini-gods. Quite rightly, the actor's obsession is with the integrity of their character. So we did a lot of work on the characters once we started rehearsal. Then there's also the thing that once you cast an actor, you lose sight of what you dreamed the part was about when you first read it – you make a decision, an act of faith in an actor and what they're going to bring to the movie, and from that moment on you can't see it in any other way. **I thought the characterisation tended to be done in broad strokes. Alex is quickly established as a cocky little shite, Christopher is the neurotic oddball, a bit of a loner, and there's the woman doctor... For me the fact that the characters were underdrawn and**

**came across as deeply unpleasant from the first made it hard to engage with.**

I disagree. I think there are other levels. I must admit that I've spent a lot of my career building up plausible characters, which intellectuals find rewarding and interesting. But the public doesn't give a fuck. They have a slightly different agenda. Now you can either despise them for their lack of rigour, or you can in some way embrace them and give them, in terms of a British film, some slightly different things, which is what we were trying to do.

I think one of the interesting things about the characters is that they're used in a way that's about the more cruel side of ourselves. They're not looked at with benevolence – that side of them, which was there at some stage in their lives, isn't explored. Of course, they're all longing to be loved but they are unable to admit that to each other and to build on it, so it becomes a relationship of advantage rather than of co-operation and sharing. The writer has chosen to take a particular moment in their lives, a moment of cruelty. At one point, we were going to call the film *Cruel*.

There is fascinating character development going on, but it's not there in a traditional way because the problem with traditional character development is that audiences are not there primarily to watch a character being drawn. What they want is the excitement and the speed of the journey that cinema can provide.

**It sounds as though you've decided what the public likes and you're going to give it to them.**

I'd agree with that, except that I'd express it slightly differently. I'd say that in the past I've been pompous in the way I've tried to present work to the audience. We're not in a naive society any more, and there's no real thirst for naive film-making. The television plays of the 60s are what I call naive. We've moved on from there now, especially since the 80s. You can't keep trying to recreate *Play for Today*. It's patronising. You can't preach to people any more.

People today are more sophisticated, highly literate, though they're given no credit for it. Through media they have access to a fabulous library of information for which they don't have to study, they don't have to have time to reflect and quietly absorb. So we tried to make a film that was intelligent entertainment, that didn't patronise people, that said if you want an agenda beyond the narrative, then you can look for it in the film – and it's there, an examination of our modern lives and how you might be at a certain age in your life.

**How does it fit with other movies about modern life?**

I think it's incredibly healthy for the film world that at Cannes, Kieślowski, who is the great master we all bow down in front of, was lined up to get the Palme d'Or and the pedestal he was on was shaken vigorously by this young punk Quentin Tarantino, who for all his faults is making



A corpse full of drugs, a suitcase full of money – the dilemmas of flat-sharing: Keith Allen as the dead Hugo



◀ exciting, dynamic cinema that people want to see.

Personally I love *Au revoir les enfants*, but I don't want to go out there and say to the British public, this is my favourite film and I'm going to make copies of it. We have lived through the war, we have lived through the welfare state. You have to try to keep up with the way society is evolving. One of the main points about *Shallow Grave* is that there are no victims, no one behaves like a victim.

**'Shallow Grave' is very different from your last work for television, 'Mr Wroe's Virgins'.**

The BBC is wonderful, but one of the problems with television is the nature of your relationship with the audience. It's there and you take it for granted and you don't even think to challenge it. It's entirely different seeing an audience in front of your film. That was one of the bizarre things about screening the film: I was thinking it was going to be exactly the same as television, where you have no relationship with your audience, but of course it's completely different: the audience is there, live, booing or clapping or walking out or doing whatever. They're teaching you things about your work, changing the film in front of you, even though, supposedly, it's fixed and finished.

**What you're describing is something that's almost interactive.**

I've got young kids, and they look at lots of stuff on television. I watched *The Simpsons* with them, and I watched them watching this picture of a modern family. It's a very sophisticated, ironic image, one I never had as a child. You can't ignore this image, even if you don't agree with it and you may despise Rupert Murdoch. But I recognise that my children are, in a small part of their consciousness, relating to me through the prism of Bart Simpson, relating to his father Homer. Children are different for having watched Bart Simpson. You have to take that on board.

**Working for television, your audience is assured. When you move into feature films do you feel that you have to make a nod in their direction, give them what they want?**

When it works, television is great, as good as any cinema, and in one sense there's no difference. But one of the things that is forced on you when you make a feature is a sense of responsibility towards money, and by extension to the audience. Making a feature film is an invigorating shower of change, you're drenched with a different sensibility.

I'm in awe of public taste. I know that if you can present your work well enough, the public can be very flexible in its reception. We're talking about a relatively small number of people, of course, because of the amount of people who go to see movies. But you have to be in sync with them. I'm a big admirer of Ken Loach's work, but I think one of the problems with *Ladybird* is that it felt to me like it was describing a society which Loach had already looked at in much

## 'Children are different for having watched Bart Simpson. You have to take that on board'

of his previous work. It hadn't moved on, and I'm afraid I think we have.

Books are slightly different because in some ways they are like a diary. As a novelist, I can say this is my book, this is what I want to say and people can take it or leave it. The stuff I do for television is similar in that respect – as long as I have a narrative and structure that can fit within a television play, I'm given the freedom to say what I want to say and I don't have to make concessions. But in feature films, a writer has to be conscious of the responsibility of manipulating the audience. **I disagree. Where do you start to draw the line? What happens when the producer comes to you and says, I really like this script, but if we had a nude scene in here and a murder there, we'd have a better chance of getting the film made? Do you go along with such suggestions?**

If he's a wanker then you just walk away from him. You don't do it by opinion poll, obviously. What you do is remember the last audience you were with and how bored they were by a particular attitude. All that goes into your consciousness and you take it into account when making your film. **What about casting? Did you have your wish list?**

If you're doing a film that's going to cost £10 million, then you have to provide interesting casting to try to recoup that money in some way. With a budget of only £1 million, you're much freer – your backers are prepared to leave you to it. We talked about the wish list, but this film was always going to be about three people and we didn't want to imbalance it by trying to approach someone like Gary Oldman, when it would become a film in which everyone would be looking at Gary Oldman. We set out deliberately to make it a partnership of three main performers. The partnership's success was recognised in Dinard when the Best Actor award went to the three of them.

The female character was always an outsider, and we decided she didn't have to be Scottish, so we asked Kerry Fox, who is a New Zealander who worked with me on *Mr Wroe's Virgins*. She's very chameleon, you don't recognise her from one appearance to another, so though she's experienced, she's also unfamiliar. Then we got Ewan McGregor, who had been in Dennis Potter's *Lipstick on Your Collar*. He has charm coming out of his eardrums, and we wanted that charm for Alex. For Christopher we wanted a gentle giant, someone very big so that when he is threatening it's actually physically frightening. We'd seen Christopher Eccleston in *Let Him Have It* and liked him.

**When I first started writing screenplays I was horrified by the way actors were brought together. In 'A Man You Don't Meet Every Day', Harriet Walter met her 'mother' during the read-through and then didn't see her again until the day they filmed the scene. I've always been surprised at the lack of time for preparation and the absence of much of a collective or collaborative experience. How long did you have for rehearsal?**

I've just watched some shorts, British shorts, made with very little time for preparation or shooting, and you can tell that the actors are just doing what they're told, that they haven't had the time to establish confidence in themselves or the people they're working with in order to make their mark on the film.

For *Shallow Grave*, we had a week. It started with two but got cut to one. We decided that instead of rehearsing in a traditional way, the three actors and myself would move into a flat together and live there for the rehearsal week – cook, watch our favourite videos, watch videos we thought were appropriate, play the music we thought was appropriate. It bound the three of them together in a way we wouldn't have achieved through traditional rehearsals with everyone slipping off to their different hotels. And it was a refresher course in what it was like to share a flat with people.

In the end we also cast John in one of the parts – as Mitchell, the copper's sidekick – because one of the problems for a writer involved day-to-day on the set is the feeling of having nothing to do, of being in the way. The crew were all drawn from Glasgow. One of the things about Britain is that our technicians are the best in the world. **Will you stay in Britain or are you tempted to go to America?**

The scale of the success of *Four Weddings and a Funeral* made people respect it. That's healthy: a commercial film that works for an audience, something that values an audience and delivers. If you want to make films that return the money, so that somebody else can make a film after you, you have to get a kid and his girlfriend or her boyfriend into the cinema on a Friday night. They're going to give you their £10 and they want to have an interesting evening, they want to be stimulated, excited. The fact that a British film like *Four Weddings* can do that throughout the world is to be celebrated, because it means that a whole range of more difficult, darker, more peculiar films can come along behind it. I think things look quite good here.

**Would you describe yourself as a business-conscious director?**

Certainly. I don't think there's anything irresponsible or ugly or callous about that. I think we have to give up the idea that the poets among us will surface and make their voices heard with the help of the Arts Council. If we want to make films, we have to think about how we can get people into the cinema.

**But don't you think there's a danger that 'Four Weddings' will be seen as a one-off – that the**

excitement it has generated won't lead to anything substantial? A bit like 'A Fish Called Wanda'?

Yes, it's a problem. We have a success and then we blow it. But the biggest danger of blowing it, I think, is in thinking we can copy the Americans. **You're right, we can't compete with the Americans. There isn't the money, but more importantly there isn't the landscape for that kind of film. In a British thriller the use of guns still seems unreal.**

That's why we made the decision not to use guns in *Shallow Grave*. There is something wholly false about fellows with guns in Britain. There are still very few guns around. For a British film we have to be clever in the way Richard Curtis was with his script for *Four Weddings*: through Mr Bean and Blackadder, he has built up a relationship with his audience.

**I don't want to give the impression of being elitist, but I am a little sceptical of this idea of crowd-pleasing. If there's art involved in film-making, isn't one of the artist's responsibilities to be in tension with the audience?**

No, no, no. Art is always an important element, but the thing about identifying your audience is that you've got to keep ahead of them. Audiences want a strong, driving narrative. You weren't surprised by the ending of *Shallow Grave*, but most of our audiences are.

**I would love to be in a position where I was working with a director with whom I shared a vision and interests, the kind of relationship Loach and Allen have built up. Have you found that kind of relationship with John Hodge?**

Yes, and the three of us hope to work together again. We're trying to adapt a book called *Train Spotting*, an extraordinary novel by Irvin Welsh. Again, it's set in Edinburgh, but it shows a very different side of Edinburgh life. It's about a group of people who happen to be deeply involved in heroin addiction, but it's a comedy – it's very, very funny. Then John has just finished an original script called *A Life Less Ordinary*, which we hope to make after that.

To work collaboratively you have to sacrifice quite a lot of yourself. One view of film-making is of a massive ego crushing everything else in pursuit of some extraordinary vision. I don't subscribe to that. In fact, it has improved my work tenfold to share it with others and to sacrifice quite a lot of my own vision. But it's difficult to find people to work with in that way.

If you were going to make a film about three professional, intelligent, affluent people living in a flat together, would you make a slow, painful film? I don't want to talk about what lies behind *Shallow Grave* because then I would be trying to set myself up as one of those people I despise – people who believe they've got a message, and other people need this message to make better lives for themselves.

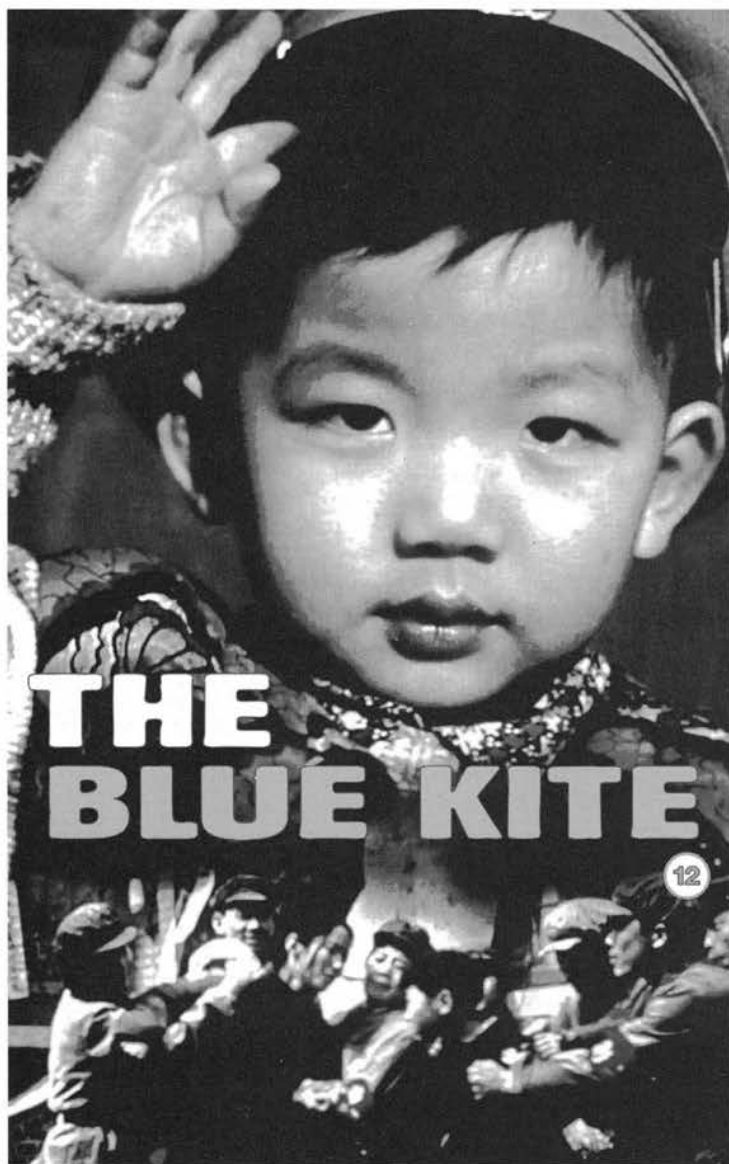
**There's a difference between a message and an idea.**

*'Shallow Grave' opens on 6 January and is reviewed on page 57 of this issue*



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# KILLING CHICKENS TO SHOW THE MONKEY

Jianying Zha returns home to talk to Chinese cinema's newest generation

**12 September** They've dug up the street again. Every year when I come home – to my native city, to the apartment I grew up in and where my mother still lives – this once sleepy neighbourhood by a mud lane takes on a more prosperous look. The whole city feels like a construction site: new buildings, new roads, rubble and junk everywhere. The air is thick with pollution, the street choking with cars. Energy and chaos. A developing country's double persona. My friends keep telling me: nowadays even we locals get confused and lost in the city.

**14 September** Feng Xiaogang, one of the hottest Chinese television personalities, drove several of us up to the nearby city of Tianjin to attend the official screening of his new television series *Chicken feathers on the Ground* (*Yi Di Jimao*). It's based on two bleakly realistic novellas by Liu Zhenyun, about how small people struggle to survive at an official work unit and at home life. Liu, who also wrote the script, originally adapted his works for Zhang Yuan (*Beijing Bastards*), but when the officials barred Zhang from the project, Feng took over. The screening, ten episodes altogether, took up a whole day. Afterwards, during the discussion session and a sumptuous banquet given by the series' anxious producer, a journalist-turned-entrepreneur who used to be Liu's colleague, it amused me to watch Feng and Liu sweet-talk the officials. They were trying to persuade them that the series is really a work along the lines of *Mainstream Melody*, a celebration of how common Chinese people triumph over life's hard travails. Feng emphasised that he has always been a 'commercial director' bent on pleasing the majority and getting high ratings.

I think the censors will pass it. It might even become the next television hit show. After all, Feng has been involved, either as director or scriptwriter, in almost all the hit shows of the past few years; he has honed an instinct for such things. And when it comes to handling the censors who guard "the healthiness of the socialist market", you can't help admiring a pair of smoothies like Feng and Liu. But though Feng has softened the novellas' deadpan narrative and added romantic shots and sentimental scenes here and there, this series is not nearly as uplifting as his past works. We shall see.

**16 September** A whole day of meetings with a group of Beijing's leading young scholars. The topic was media and cultural criticism, but the

atmosphere, as one participant put it afterwards, was like that of "a funeral Chinese intellectuals held for themselves". By the end, the discussion had turned into a rambling, uncontrollable lament over the vulgarities of China's current commercial media and mass culture. "The number of ads between the evening news and the weather report has gone up to 14," said a scholar, throwing up his arms in despair, "and then in the graphics for each province, they now show big shopping malls instead of historical landmarks." Another sighed softly: "But my seven-year-old son likes to chant all the lines from his favourite commercials." He did a "quick beef noodle" imitation; nobody laughed.

Over the last few months, an intense debate has been raging among Chinese intellectuals. The subject, launched by a group of Shanghai critics and scholars, was dauntingly large and serious: "Has the humanist spirit been lost in today's China?" This has generated much heat and a flood of articles in all sorts of papers and magazines. Some of them sound like a shouting match between the popular culture camp and the elite, the left and the right, the well-to-do and the poor and wretched. The question obviously touched a nerve.

**18 September** The word about a 'music drama' came through the grapevine, the tickets passed on among friends, and Club Sakesasi (the name sounds so much more exotic than the English it approximates, 'success') was moved safely into a back street on the east side of Beijing. Once inside, it quickly occurred to me that 'music drama' is nothing more than a euphemism for a rock concert. Nowadays the kids know to play safe and the officials seem happy to close one eye to such a perfunctory front. It was only towards the end of the concert that the crowd started to show signs of energy: a lot of them stood up, clapped their hands, while some in the front rows even danced a few steps. Almost instantly, some men (plain-clothed security?) appeared below the stage, motioning for order. Xiao Meng, a young art student who gave me the ticket, whispered to me with visible excitement: "Here comes the fun part! You never know what will happen!"

But the agitation ebbed almost immediately, and soon we found ourselves on the way out with the throngs of well-behaved youth. Life has become relatively normal, and already there is a listlessness, a sense of boredom, in the air.

Called at Zhang Yuan's place after the concert. He's leaving for New York in a couple of days for some film occasions. *Beijing Bastards* has been sold for commercial release in the US,

Zhang was happy to inform me, and he has finished shooting a new black and white documentary called *The Square* (*Guangchang*). "It was hard work," Zhang said with a grin, obviously in a good mood. "We've been going to Tiananmen with a camera every day for the past few months, waiting entire days for the right sort of interviews to come along." What is it about? "All sorts of interesting things related to the square, which is a great microcosm of our society. History is very important, but we are more concerned with what's happening today." Any trouble from the officials? "Well, we know how to get our work done here." With great verve he told a story about organising hundreds of extras from the Beijing Film Studio's network for a particular shot. "I've got to pay them, truck them off to the site, feed them and get the shots done in one day. It's not cheap for me." But he gets it done. Constrained by small budgets and with no major institutional back-up, China's independent film-makers have to be resourceful, determined and shrewd. Zhang Yuan is still one of the smartest of the crop.

**20 September** The mundane farces of Chinese television: it's a topic people here are never tired of talking about, partly because television, on which so many depend, is still the cheapest form of entertainment. And this year there hasn't been a single show to make the sort of big splash we've seen in the past two years. But a lot of people in the media consider Central Chinese Television (CCTV)'s daily news programme *Eastern Time and Space* (*Dongfang Shikong*) "a quiet revolution in Chinese television". The programme started last May, and even though it must go through CCTV's usual official censors, its mostly young staff members have been given a freer hand.

I watch it in the morning. It is divided into four slots. The first, entitled 'Sons of the East', is about the World Swimming Tournament and includes an interview with the coach for the national women's team. Asked about international protest over Chinese athletes' use of steroids, the coach flatly denies it, saying that a certain superpower country uses steroids itself, but stirs up other countries against us, "a thief calling out to catch a thief". He then concludes with more patriotic lines. The second slot is a musical one – as usual this morning they have another sweet pop song about love, with the singer in a white gauzy dress floating through various rosy or bright green landscapes. Third comes 'Space of Lives', which usually tells a story about an ordinary person: today it's a nice small-town girl who helps out her garbage col-





Beijing diaspora: Wu Wenguang (right) shoots 'The World as My Home'

lector mother and passes the college entrance exam. Finally there is 'Focus Point', which covers a discussion about Chinese universities starting to demand full tuition next year, and then the American landing in Haiti.

For those who are familiar with standard Chinese television news, this programme has some refreshing traits: more direct interviews, more neutrality of reporting here and there (as in the coverage of the American landing). But on the whole, one can easily recognise the official censorship and self-censorship (as with the steroids story or the pop songs), and the programme doesn't have the technical smoothness of news in the west. Switch to other channels, though, and you are back to Stone Age news – the usual stiff anchors reading out dull party propaganda without giving anybody else a chance to use their tongue. By comparison with that, *Eastern Time and Space* seems a pretty loud revolution.

All the same, certain lines are not to be crossed. So today's major domestic story – an armed police officer, upset with his superior, who went on a random shooting spree in the heart of Beijing, killing nine people including an Iranian diplomat and his young son – went unreported. A family friend phoned from Guangzhou, telling me that it was the lead story on all Hong Kong's television channels. Down south in the Special Economic Zones, anybody can set up antennae to watch Hong Kong televi-

sion, even though this is officially illegal; up north, word of mouth is still the way when it comes to hard news.

**23 September** Had dinner at Wu Wenguang's small, cosy apartment. His pleasantly cluttered living room shows more taste than any of my other Beijing friends' homes. Wu has nearly finished cutting *The World as My Home* (Sihai Wei Jia), a nearly three-hour sequel to his 1991 *The Last Dreamers* (Liulang Beijing – Zuihou de Mengxiangzhe), which documented the lives of five struggling independent artists. That, and another documentary, 1966: *My Time as a Red Guard*, have brought Wu some international attention alongside other independents such as Zhang Yuan and Wang Xiaoshuai. This time, it took a trip around the world for Wu to track down the same five artists who now live in five different countries, with only one remaining in Beijing. A few months ago, as he finished shooting in the US, his last stop, Wu told me he was very satisfied with the results. Now he says he'll be able to give me a rough version in a couple of weeks and then he'll be on his way abroad again, taking part in film festivals in Germany and Japan. These days, Wu said, scratching his chin, he and his pal Zhang Yuan are both so busy that they see more of one another outside China than in Beijing.

In the past Wu has used CCTV's studio (on

those days when no one else uses the equipment) to cut his films. This time he cut *The World as My Home* at another big state company's studio. Like all other independents, he has helpful friends in the right places and knows his way around the system. One of these friends, Li, was at dinner. He is a CCTV employee, but has been working for Wu as the film's editing advisor. "When I see money," Li quipped, "I forget all about principles." He meant the opposite, since Wu hasn't paid him a cent. In fact, a lot of people at CCTV know about Wu's projects and nobody has made it hard for him so far.

As central control breaks down in so many things, grey areas and blurred lines between the official and the non-official are what enable many Chinese artists to survive and create. Yet as more independent artists grow to depend on outside support and foreign audiences while their works remain unseen in China, they and their foreign patrons are criticised by some for manipulating a niche for each other's benefit. Not long ago, a particularly sarcastic article by a veteran China observer described the mainland independent film scene as "subcolonial" and the film-makers as short in talent but wise in the ways of the world. "But let's call garbage garbage," he wrote bluntly.

I know Wu Wenguang from the days before he got any foreign support and find it hard to see him as disingenuous – he's almost too earnest sometimes. Still, the criticism about the whole pack disturbs me. Artistic and political virtues are subjective qualities, especially in such a complicated, shifting situation as current China. Yet what if these 'bastard' works did get shown publicly in their home country? Would these small, rough films really beat the imported Hong Kong martial art schlock or the Hollywood B movies at the box office? Or the better-financed and better-made Fifth Generation movies? Or the more straightlaced movies made by official studios? Talent is rarely the only issue involved in film-making in China.

Wu told me during dinner: "I'm going to apply for public release here this time. Hopeless, probably. Who wants to recognise his bastard son?" He shrugged. "But I'll try anyway. Just to find out."

**27 September** Around 10 pm, Zhang Yimou and Wang Bin came to my mother's apartment for a chat. Wang was an avant-garde literary critic before Tiananmen, but in the last few years he has been acting as the liaison person between Zhang and the literary community, which has made him the focus of every writer in town.

Zhang is in his usual minimalist attire: ►



◀ blue jeans, cotton top, tennis shoes. Since he and Gong Li have recently got a new apartment on the same block as my mother, we are now neighbours. But small talk about housing and Beijing's real estate market didn't last long; with Zhang, anything can lead to movies, and for the next three hours, the conversation never digressed. At the moment, his new project *Shanghai Triad* (*Yao a Yao, Yao dao Waipo Qiao*) is running into trouble. Having banned his last film *To Live* (*Huozhe*), the authorities are also suspending for the next two years his right to shoot any film co-financed by a non-Chinese company. Like all his films in recent years, *Shanghai*, a movie about gangs in pre-communist Shanghai (Zhang said the script had got too complicated for a summary), is a joint production. So Zhang had to put his shooting schedule on hold to deal with the situation by *pao ren shi* – the all-encompassing Chinese phrase for the messy process of running around talking with all related persons (officials, producers, etc.) to solve a problem. So far, he is still running. Among the Chinese verdicts about *To Live*, he told me, has been “politically reactionary, artistically mediocre”. Since last year's Tokyo Film Festival incident, the film censors have been putting their claws into film-makers like Zhang Yuan and Tian Zhuangzhuang. That's like killing chickens to show the monkey, as the Chinese proverb goes. “Now they're patting their axes on the monkey's head, too,” said Zhang. “It just shows you that they can make your life uncomfortable.”

We talk about this year's film and literature. Zhang liked Li Shaohong's new feature *Red Powder* (*Hongfen*), based on Su Tong's novel about reforming prostitutes. “It really brought out the novel's southern, effeminate flavour.” Zhang's own *Raise the Red Lantern* was also based on one of Su's novels. China's new cinema has always had a close, inspired relationship with its new fiction, and most of the Fifth Generation works are adaptations of novels or short stories. In the past few years, though, fiction magazines and serious novels have suffered a decline in readership, while money and fame has flowed into the sight and sound industry. As a result, Chinese novelists increasingly write with an eye on the screen; every year, more of my writer friends (especially the successful ones) join the troops scriptwriting for television – soaps, sitcoms, historical drama, anything that brings money quickly. And if they are lucky, they'll get a phone call from a big-name movie director.

Two incidents this year involving top-notch writers working as screen hacks were much talked about. Ten male writers teamed up to write a television series about fashion models, and at Zhang Yimou's request six novelists (three men and three women) wrote up, separately, six novels about Qu Zetian – the only Chinese empress who ruled in her own right – as the basis for a future script (on Zhang's schedule after *Shanghai*). A Shanghai literary critic joked: “There is only one careful reader of fiction left in China now – Zhang Yimou.” (Of course, Zhang is hardly the only director working closely with novelists. Chen Kaige, for one, has been working on his new film with two well-known novelists, and has now started

shooting in Shanghai.) A few days ago, the famous Beijing novelist Wang Shuo informed Zhang: “I've read some new fiction that is definitely waving its hands at you!” But Zhang says that nowadays there is little good fiction around. Perhaps that's why he has been asking novelists to write up novels at his suggestion. This approach has caused some media people to speculate about the declining status of Chinese writers, who have become hired hands at the beck and call of movie directors. But all the writers involved said that such arrangements were fine by them. “The 80s was the golden era for pure literature,” Zhang concluded. “Now it's not easy for people to get so excited about fiction; but maybe this is more normal. Folks like my parents get hooked on soaps; they just won't miss a single episode.”

The life of Empress Wu Zetian, like that of the last emperor of China, is the stuff of extravagant legend and tragedy, and Zhang says he is really only able to take on such a big-budget production because a major foreign company has made an offer to finance it. By then, let's hope, he will be allowed to work with the ‘foreign devils’ again.

**12 October** Came back from a trip to Hainan Island (‘the freest zone in China’, which also turned out to be the sex and porn zone), and found that I'd missed two more opportunities to attend screenings of new movies: Jiang Wen's *In the Heat of the Sun* (*Yangguang Canlan de Rizi*) about growing up during the Cultural Revolution, and Lou Ye's *Weekend Lover* (*Zhoumo Qingren*) about today's urban youth, described to me by two film people as “an experience just like when we watched Truffaut for the first time”. As for me, other screenings I've missed recently are Hu Xueyang's *Lost Youth* (*Yanmo De Qingchun*) and Li Shaohong's *Red Powder* (*Hongfen*). Instead of experiencing a young Chinese Truffaut, I was watching shoddy midnight Hong Kong porn movies in a sleazy local theatre on a southern border island. So much for trading places.

**25 October** Saw *Butterfly Dream* (*Hudie Meng*), the new play directed by Lin Zhaohua, in a large, full theatre. It's a warm, funny take on the famous story about the Taoist master Zhuang Zhou and his wife. Lin is still the most popular and inventive figure at China's most prestigious theatre company Renyi (Beijing People's Art Theatre). I've heard some younger independent playwrights dismiss him as turning too mainstream, even commercial; the larger picture, though, is that this mainstream scene has dwindled to next to nothing. Even worse than the film industry, China's theatres have been suffering financial problems and audience loss, so at any given season you might have only one or two plays selling tickets in Beijing.

This is a similar picture to the splintered, tension-fraught scene in current cinema. A friend told me about a film conference he attended in Shanghai last week. Vitriolic attacks on the “post-colonial commercial sell-outs” Chen Kaige and Zhang Yimou, he reported, had been voiced by nearly all partici-

pants, including some well-known critics and directors. And among several new features screened there, the conference hailed *Dirt* (*Toufa Luanle*) as representing the best of the new Sixth Generation works. My friend wasn't too impressed by the film, can't even remember the name of its director (it's Guan Hu). After weeks of publicity for its Shanghai premiere at a downtown theatre, he said, the movie sold depressingly few tickets.

The situation brings to mind a long article in a major Chinese theatre and cinema newspaper earlier this year. Listing all sorts of perilous institutional problems the Chinese film industry is facing, the author compared the fate of European cinema to that of Chinese cinema: just as Hollywood is pushing into Europe, Hong Kong is flooding the Chinese movie houses, and since Hollywood is also cutting into Hong Kong's movie market, Hong Kong now needs the mainland box office more and more. In these global market waves, even top directors such as Chen and Zhang are merely “high-ranking employees” controlled by their Hong Kong producers. According to this article, in 1993 foreign-financed productions accounted for 30 per cent of the total output in China, and in film trading conferences these “beat to the ground” the domestically funded features. This is to say nothing of a Wild West-like industry of pirated films and videos beating to the ground just about everyone else. With so many film-makers fighting for survival in the cracks between financial problems, popular taste, institutional bankruptcy and arbitrary censorship, can people be expected to be even-tempered and generous about each other's work?

**12 November** Watched Wu Wenguang's sequel *The World as My Home*. The tape is not the final product and parts of it could certainly use some tightening up. I suppose this is the sort of low-key, personal film that people will either walk out of or get drawn into despite themselves. Like the English documentary *Seven Up* and its sequels, it helps a great deal if you have seen the five characters' previous profiles in *The Last Dreamers*. But this follow-up contains some truly poignant, revealing moments, all narrated in eerily matter-of-fact fashion. I found the two women especially effective: the first, who married an Austrian, used to be a painter; the second, who married a Californian, a writer; both have become housewives and mothers in foreign countries, but the two form a diametrical contrast in their respective melancholy and complacency.

Before leaving Beijing I heard the news that Zhang Yimou had changed *Shanghai Triad* into a Shanghai Film Studio production and was able to start shooting on location. *Chicken Feathers on the Ground* passed the censors and will be televised by December. Zhang Yuan returned from New York and Tokyo, and is editing *The Square*. Wu Wenguang is back home too, polishing up *The World as My Home* before writing a book about his five interviewees. Nothing is stopping these people from getting on with their beloved work. And that is one of the most hopeful things I felt on the trip.



# Notes from the underground

Since I want to be sincere – and I don't have time to think up something that might constitute a 'prestigious' obsession – I will talk about one of my truest and fondest memories in film.

I must have been about ten years old (and already a horror junkie) when I saw *Death Line* – aka *Raw Meat* – a remarkable debut film by Gary Sherman made in the 70s. The movie deals with a cannibalistic race, the product of a cave-in during the construction of a new London Underground station which occurred in the late nineteenth century. Abandoned to their own devices, the surviving workers and their wives start to feed on each other and, eventually, on people kidnapped from the subway platforms. Plague, disease and incest transform this Sawney Bean-like clan into cannibalistic beings deprived of a language but for three words: "Mind the doors..."

The film starts with the last of the underground men (Hugh Armstrong) losing his pregnant mate to a wasting disease and being compelled to look for a new bride. He manages to kidnap a girl (Sharon Gurney) and courts her as best he can, only to be killed at the end by her boyfriend (David Ladd) who crushes our hero's skull with the heel of his boot.

I was able to sneak into the movie (rated 18) only because I had an accomplice: my uncle Guillermo. We used to talk for hours about theories of evolution while watching *2001: A Space Odyssey*; we regularly bought the same comic books; and we would wander around Guadalajara looking for our favourite horror films. Peter Cushing was our matinee idol but we settled for Christopher Lee more than once. Although prominently featured in the ads for *Death Line*, Lee appears only briefly as part of a clumsy detective sub-plot.

We engaged in a fierce battle with the ticket lady, who finally let me in simply because my uncle insisted I was his son. "You're perverting that poor kid's mind," she said. Boy, she had no idea. *Death Line* became a seminal experience for me. It forever altered the way I see horror and, in many ways, the way I see film.

The story is based on a classic fairytale structure. It begins with a daydreaming 'princess' (she reads supernatural books) engaged in an unsatisfying relationship with a superficial 'prince'. Through his mistakes she falls prey to a seemingly disgusting 'monster' who kidnaps her into his underground world. She is transformed by this 'journey', her innocence tainted, her view of the world changed – for in the closing moments of the film she finds pity for the monster.

This is indeed a perfect re-telling of 'Beauty and the Beast', packing every one of the original story's punches with no concessions to the audience's expectations. I reject the more mainstream approach to the monster-as-hero in films like *E.T.* because the creature has to be homogenised into a marketing piece. He has to be 'cute' in order to touch the hearts of the audience.

In *Death Line*, on the other hand, Gary Sherman succeeds in making the plight of

**Mexican horror film-maker Guillermo del Toro, director of the recently released 'Cronos', recalls a nightmare ride on the London Underground: his youthful viewing of cannibal film 'Death Line'**

the monster sympathetic, even moving, while speaking about it on its own terms. Smelly, drooling all the time, covered with scars and oozing bald spots, this is the true Beast of the fable. Even his courtship is shot through with brutal details – at one point the underground man rescues the screaming heroine from a large rat by biting off the animal's head. Eventually, through pure redemption, his hopelessness becomes ours.

This inept, plague-ridden Messiah is thrown into the world with only three words to help him carry out his sacred reproductive task: "Mind the doors." That is his bible, nothing else. He will pronounce those words again and again, with every possible nuance, as he tries to communicate with his potential future bride. All the way through the film we are aware of how easy it is for a man to become a monster. All you need is to be the wrong colour or to lack a language to be denied of your human essence by an uncaring world.

*Death Line* is permeated by the kind of grim poetry exclusive to the horror genre. Following a grand gothic tradition, rays of light, as pure as you can imagine, shine within the darkness: the heroine's finding compassion for the 'monster' can be valid only because of her relentless ordeal; the immaculate quality of the underground man's love can be appreciated only through veils of brutality; the epic stature of his quest is graphically depicted by the stacks of the mummified bodies of his ancestors.

As in all the best horror films, *Death Line* is told from the loser's point of view and makes society the real villain. Sherman's monster is a fragile creature, the ultimate underprivileged wretch destroyed at the end by a callous proto-yuppie. The underground world and its denizens are the creatures of man: the anonymous company responsible for their ordeal had declared bankruptcy and abandoned the survivors. So London forgets its disenfranchised children, only to see them resurface several

generations later as cannibalistic creatures.

Subways are fascinating and hugely resonant, especially the London Underground. Sherman's masterstroke in *Death Line*, which makes it a paradigmatic work, is his combination of horror with the everyday. Unlike *Quatermass and the Pit* – another good genre film about the Underground – *Death Line* refuses to be grandiloquent. The film smells of old pee and burned ozone and humidity. It fashions a gothic catacomb out of white tile and concrete. Every texture in it belongs to the real world.

When we came out of the cinema, my uncle and I were raving about the film. We wanted to believe that, at the end, the heroine had been changed, that she had finally connected with the wretched creature in a way reserved only for monster love stories. We hoped that she had discovered in his fragility a more humane element than anything found in her relationship with her apathetic lover. "She now knows what her boyfriend is capable of," said my uncle. "She has realised that when the time comes, he might be just as brutal with her as he was with the creature."

In order to prove our theories my uncle and I agreed to see *Death Line* again in the near future. Accordingly, I used my Christmas money to buy a false moustache, that I could use to get into the cinema with less difficulty. Unfortunately we never had the chance to execute our plan. My uncle died one frightful day more than a decade ago and the movie never played again in my home town (the moustache was put to good use later, to see a horrible Italian film).

But whenever I go into the London Underground now, and get on a train and hear that crackling electronic voice utter "Mind the gap", *Death Line* comes immediately to mind. Such is the trademark of powerful films (*Psycho* and the shower, *Jaws* and the sea): to never let go.

To haunt us all the way back home. Guillermo del Toro talked to John Kraniauskas



'Death Line': flesh-eating undergrounder Hugh Armstrong



# REVIEWS

Reviews, synopses and full credits for all the month's new films plus National Film Theatre previews and selected British independent films

## Amateur

France/United Kingdom/USA 1994

Director: Hal Hartley

### Certificate

15

### Distributor

Artificial Eye  
Production Company  
UGC  
Zenith Productions  
True Fiction Pictures  
In association with  
Channel Four Films  
American Playhouse  
Theatrical Films  
La Sept Cinéma

### Executive Producers

Jerome Brownstein  
Lindsay Law  
Scott Meek  
Yves Marmion

### Producers

Hal Hartley  
Ted Hope

### Production Co-ordinator

Victoria McGarry  
Production Manager

Christopher Goode

### Location Manager

Eddy Collyns

### Assistant Directors

Gregory Jacobs  
Allen Kupetsky  
Robert C. Albertell

### Casting

Billy Hopkins  
Suzanne Smith

### Screenplay

Hal Hartley

### Director of Photography

Michael Spiller

### Editor

Steven Hamilton

### Production Designer

Steve Rosenzweig

### Art Director

Ginger Tougas

### Set Decorators

Jennifer Baime  
Amy Tapper

### Special Effects

Drew Jiritano

### Firearms

Weapons

### Specialists Ltd

Rick Washburne

### Costume Design

Alexandra Welker

### Wardrobe Supervisor

Marina Marit

### Make-up/Hairstylists

Judy Chin

### Music

Jeff Taylor

### Sound Mixer

Ned Rifle

### Sound Mixer

Jeff Pullman

### Stunt Co-ordinator

Phil Neilson

### Fight Director

James McCauley

### Cast

Isabelle Huppert  
Isabelle  
Martin Donovan  
Thomas  
Elina Lowensohn  
Sofia  
Damian Young  
Edward  
Chuck Montgomery  
Jan  
David Simonds  
Kurt

### Pamela Stewart

Officer Melville

Erica Gimpel

Irate Woman

Jan Leslie Harding

Waitress

Terry Alexander

Frank, the Cook

Holt McCallany

Usher

Hugh Palmer

Warren

Michael Imperioli

Doorman at Club

Angel Caban

Detective

Emmanuel Xuereb

Bartender

Lennie Loftin

Taxi Driver

David Greenspan

George, the

Pornographer

Adria Tennor

Kid Reading

'The Odyssey'

Parker Posey

Girl Squatter

Dwight Ewell

Boy Squatter

Currie Graham

Video Store Clerk

Jamie Harrold

Pizza Guy

Patricia Scanlon

Young Irate Mother

James McCauley

Benny Nieves

Policemen

David Truap

Guard

Tim Blake Nelson

Young Detective

Marissa Copeland

Sister at Door

Dael Orlandersmith

Mother Superior

Michael Gaston

Sharpshooter

Paul Schulze

Cop Who Shoots

Thomas

9,446 feet

105 minutes

Dolby stereo

In colour



Creative accounting: Martin Donovan, Damian Young

man running Thomas's gang. Edward suggests she take refuge in an empty house he knows of in Porchester, upstate New York. But Sofia unwisely phones Jacques, who sends two heavies, Jan and Kurt, after her. She evades them, but they capture Edward and torture him.

Deducing that Sofia is Sofia Ludens, international porn-movie queen, Thomas and Isabelle find her apartment, where Isabelle dresses in Sofia's clothes. They are about to make love when Jan and Kurt show up and they hide. Sofia arrives and is tied up by the hitmen; while Jan goes to phone Jacques, Kurt prepares to torture her. Thomas and Isabelle emerge, force Kurt out of the window to his death, and escape with Sofia in Jan's car, making for Porchester.

Edward, deranged by torture, tries desperately to contact Sofia. His violent behaviour gets him arrested, but he shoots a cop and steals a police car. At Porchester, Sofia, still mistrustful of Thomas, refuses to tell him who he is. Edward arrives; a stand-off between him and Thomas is interrupted by the arrival of Jan, who shoots Sofia. Edward kills Jan, and they drive the wounded Sofia to Isabelle's old convent which is nearby. There, Sofia tells Isabelle about Thomas's past, but Isabelle is undeterred. The police, trailing Edward, arrive and surround the convent, and when Thomas opens the gates they shoot him dead.

A recent piece in *Film Comment* described *Amateur* as an "underwhelmer". It's not clear how far this was meant as a putdown, since underwhelming is Hal Hartley's preferred mode. The melodramatic content of his plots is constantly undercut by deadpan playing, coolly distanced photography and dialogue with its inverted-commas quizzically raised. His own summary of the film as "an action thriller... with one flat tyre" catches the mood; we're a million miles from the hi-tech multiple pile-ups that pass for action movies these days. *Amateur*, with its fated, philosophising characters, evokes a subtler style of thriller altogether, the post-war French school of doomy existentialist gangster-mélos such as *Le Doulos* or *Touchez pas au grisbi* – or even, given its ironic, half-mocking slant on its noirish trappings, Truffaut's *Tirez*

sur le pianiste.

Derivations apart, though, the relatively dense plotting gives *Amateur* an edge over Hartley's last feature, *Simple Men*, which ran out of plot halfway through and thereafter bogged down in its own whimsical talkiness. The present film uses dialogue to salt the action, not as a substitute for it – with the paradoxical result that we get closer to the characters, whereas those of *Simple Men* tended to retreat from us behind a fog of verbiage. At the climax, with Thomas gunned down on the brink of accepting his new, gentler persona and Isabelle's love, there's even a hint of genuine tragic feeling – something of a fresh departure in Hartley's work.

Not that fans of his trademark quirky cameos and off-the-wall dialogue need feel short-changed. "Jan, we go way back," pleads Edward as the heavies prepare to torture him, "we were accountants together." As always with Hartley, aspirations and career choices furnish some of his best lines: the pornographer for whom Isabelle works muses, "I never intended this. My ambition was defamatory journalism." Indeed it's a running gag in the film that most of the people seem hopelessly unsuited to what they do, from Isabelle Huppert's inept pornographer to the soft-hearted cop (an appealingly tremulous performance from Pamela Stewart) disastrously determined to find good in everyone.

Hence, no doubt, the title – although Hartley disarmingly claims it also refers to the way he feels as a filmmaker. But in fact *Amateur* is his most assured performance so far, skilfully hijacking the conventions of a mainstream genre to explore his personal angles and preoccupations. His characters always have a tentative, fingertip attitude, as though testing out reality to see if it will bear their weight – a quality for which Huppert's withdrawn, ethereal air is ideally suited, blending seamlessly in alongside Hartley regulars like Martin Donovan and Elina Lowensohn. *Simple Men* aroused fears that the freshness of *Trust* and *The Unbelievable Truth* might be turning into a reflex action, offbeat-by-numbers. But this, it seems, was only a temporary hiatus: *Amateur* finds Hartley transporting his idiosyncratic vision unpaired into a whole new field.

Philip Kemp

A man, Thomas, lies in a New York alley, apparently dead. A dark-haired young woman peers at the body, then runs away. Thomas revives and staggers into a coffee shop where he meets Isabelle, an ex-nun trying to make a living writing pornography. Since Thomas is suffering from amnesia, Isabelle takes him home and looks after him. Talking in his sleep, he threatens someone called Sofia.

Sofia, the dark-haired woman, contacts Edward, a shady accountant, and tells him she has killed Thomas. He was her husband, a vicious crook who forced her into prostitution and porno films, and was trying to blackmail Jacques, the powerful Dutch business-



# Chasers

USA 1994

Director: Dennis Hopper

Certificate  
15

Distributor

Warner Bros  
Production Company  
Morgan Creek  
Executive Producer  
Gary Barber

Producer  
James G. Robinson

Co-producer  
David Wisniewitz

Production Supervisor

Karen Penhale

Production Co-ordinator

Louise Rosner

Unit Production Managers

David Wisniewitz

Paul Lewis

Location Manager

T.J. Healy II

Post-production Supervisor

Jody Levin

Assistant Directors

Babu Subramaniam

Richard Coad

Casting

Mary Jo Slater

Local:

Action Casting

Martha Lee

Screenplay

Joe Batteer

John Rice

Dan Gilroy

Story

Joe Batteer

John Rice

Script Supervisor

Marita Grabiak

Director of Photography

Ueli Steiger

2nd Unit Director

of Photography

Paul Taylor

Editor

Christian A. Wagner

Production Designer

Robert Pearson

Art Director

Natalie Wilson

Set Decorator

Kate Sullivan

Set Dresser

Drew Sywanyk

Special Effects

Co-ordinator

Michael Schorr

Special Effects

Mike Adams

Russell Hardee

Robert J. Heintz

Steve Lanier

Bill Russell

Costume Design

Michael Boyd

Costume Supervisor

Deborah Latham

Make-up

Allan Apone

Dean Jones

Hairstylists

Michelle Johnson

Shelly Hutchins

Titles/Opticals

Pacific Title

Music

Dwight Yoakam

Pete Anderson

Music Editor

Jim Henrickson

Songs/Music Extracts

"Doin' What I Did",

"1,000 Miles From

Nowhere", "Guitars,

Cadillacs" by and

performed by Dwight

Yoakam; "Atlas Blues",

"Moving Me (Way Too

Fast)" by Steve Pryor,

Scott Hutchison,

performed by Steve

Pryor Band; "Rock With

You" by Tommy

Conwell, Marcy Rauer,

performed by Tommy

Conwell & the Young

Rumblers; "I Don't

Believe You've Met My

Baby", by Autry Inman,

"We Used To Fuss",

"Sharon" by Jeff Rymes,

performed by

Lonesome Strangers;

"Train 45" by La Rue,

performed by Ralph

Stanley; "Cryin' Time"

by and performed by

Buck Owens; "Sam"

by Curt Kirkwood,

performed by Meat

Puppets; "Lucky 13" by

Jim Lauderdale, John

Messler, performed by

Jim Lauderdale; "Right

On My Way Home" by

Lynn Gibson, Bob

Dorough, performed

by Victoria Duffy, Bob

Dorough; "The Thrill

is Gone" by Roy

Hawkins, Rick Darnell,

performed by B.B.King;

"Corrido de Cananea"

by Ruben Fuentes

Supervising Sound Editors

Gregg Baxter

Wylie Stateman

Dialogue Editors

Dan Rich

Chris Hogan

Richard Dwan

Christopher Assells

ADR Editors

Bill Voigtlander

Laura Graham

Foley Editors

Kelly Oxford

Craig Jaeger

Bob Beher

Sound Mixer

Roger Pietschmann

ADR Mixer

Christina Tucker

Foley Mixer

David Gertz

Sound Re-records

Rick Ash

Dean Zupancic

Sound Effects Editors

Dino Dimuro

Randy Kelly

Jay B. Richardson

Steve Schwalbe

Phil Hess

Foley Artists

James Moriana

Jeffrey Wilhoit

Group ADR

L.A. Maddogs

Stunt Co-ordinator

Eddy Donno

Cast

Tom Berenger

Rock Reilly

William McNamara

Eddie Devane

Erika Eleniak

Toni Johnson

Crispin Glover

Howard Finster

Matthew Glave

Rory Blanes

Grand L. Bush

Vance Dooley

Dean Stockwell

Salesman Stig

Bitty Schram

Flo

Gary Bussey

Sergeant Vince Banger

Seymour Cassel

Master Chief Bogg

Frederic Forrest

Duane

Marilu Henner

Katie

Dennis Hopper

Doggie

Scott Marlowe

Fast Food Clown

Jim Grimshaw

Chief Yarbboro

Mick McGovern

State Trooper

Charles Page

Guard Box Marine

Richard Peitzman

Redneck Guy

Laura Cathey

Check-out Girl

Jim Bath

Salvage Yard Guy

Michael Flippo

Biker Bartender

Rick Warner

Master Chief

Robert Priestler

Jon Rodgers

Matthew Sullivan

Seamen

Gene Dann

Wino

Michael Martin

Elderly Man

Victoria Duffy

Elizabeth Hawkins

Sailors

Michael O'Brien

Lieutenant

Tony Donno

Ball Retriever

Wallace Wilkinson

Preacher

Robert Pentz

Jackson Pinckney III

Jimmy Lee Sessoms

Street Toughs

Melissa Detwiler

Ted Detwiler

People on Bridge

Bob Dorough

Piano Player/Singer

John Christopher Stuart

Flag Raiser

Yoni Prima

Tour Guide

9,108 feet

101 minutes

Dolby stereo

In colour

Prints by

Technicolor

Charleston, South Carolina. On his last day in the Navy, cocky young con-man 'Fast' Eddie Devane is about to travel cross-country to pick up an illicit Porsche but is assigned to 'chaser' duty, helping the Shore Patrol transport a prisoner back to base. He and his partner, gruff Navy veteran Rock Reilly, discover that due to a clerical error they have been sent to escort a woman, Toni Johnson. Tricked into accepting the prisoner, they set out on their journey. At a diner, Johnson disguises herself as a waitress and escapes, only to have her getaway foiled by bad driving. Next, she causes the van to break down on a disused road. Now on foot, the three fall down a mining shaft. Johnson convinces the men to let her stand on their shoulders and get out; about to escape, she changes her mind and saves them.

The three begin to soften to each other, and exchange family details. Johnson reveals that she was jailed for striking an officer when refused emergency leave to visit her brother, as he lay dying of an overdose. That night, while Reilly sleeps, Johnson overhears Eddie as he discovers his Porsche has been taken in his absence. Later, drunk and depressed, Eddie releases Johnson to have sex. She escapes again, stealing a car, but is again recaptured. Losing their tempers as they lock her up, Reilly and Eddie fight each other to a standstill. Finally, they reach their destination and hand Johnson to the Navy.

The next morning, Reilly, who has sympathy for Johnson has grown, organises her escape, with Eddie's help. A year later, Eddie and Johnson are living in Mexico. They call up Reilly, who is retired and living with a waitress.

The second decline of Dennis Hopper's directing career has gone almost unnoticed, perhaps even by himself. Since the promising fresh start of *Colors*, the man who transformed Hollywood with his debut *Easy Rider* - then found himself thrown to the wolves for a decade after his folly *The Last Movie* - has become something very close to a hack. In recent interviews, Hopper has suggested that he is making films like *Chasers*, and its predecessors *The Hot Spot* and *Catchfire*, almost

as a form of politeness - a demonstration of professionalism as a prelude to some new bout of wildness, by which time the studios will be on his side at last. It's a peculiarly ingenuous strategy, and a game only Hollywood can win. Hopper has gambled his creativity on a reward he may never touch, a future made more certain with each small-scale flop. *Chasers* is simply another bad dice-roll. That it's Hopper's worst film seems almost secondary.

In a sense, *Chasers*' faults are a product of one of the several chain reactions that *Easy Rider* sparked. Its script follows the bland youth-fascist assumptions which the briefly radicalised teen movie was reduced to by the onset of the 80s. Tom Berenger's Reilly can ooze character all he likes, but it's the kids that count. This could be stomachached if William McNamara were not so vacuous. A Tom Cruise lookalike, communicating all that actor's superficial, sulky smugness, minus the saving hint that he might be acting, McNamara is a hole, permitted to kick Berenger to a standstill because he's young and therefore right. The use of veteran *Baywatch* babe Erika Eleniak, a better actor, is also dumb. Her stripping to her underwear to escape a mineshaft is a prelude to a sex scene designed to uncover her breasts. For all its pretensions to more, *Chasers* is at heart a film for frat-boys.

Surely aware of this weakness, Hopper has stuffed his cast with personal friends and canny improvisors, giving his film a fringe of eccentric naturalism (Dean Stockwell playing with toy cars, Gary Bussey muttering about fish, Hopper himself howling, "It's the doggiest day!"). Like the cast of the studio-batched *Catchfire*, which ranged from Vincent Price to Bob Dylan, these friendly faces are a kind of insulation for Hopper's talent from the mess around him.

This sense of an artist not dead but resting is encouraged by *Chasers*' visual aspect. The film in fact achieves a peripheral vision of America which at times approaches profundity, astonishing in the context of such a minor film. Taking images which should be clichés, the familiar neon detritus of roadside signs which litter America, Hopper picks and focuses with such care that an extreme exoticism shows through. Roadside encounters which might otherwise be grotesque - such as Berenger's chasing of a pig-costumed burger waiter, or a fight amid a hail of crazy golf balls - are here funny without a hint of condescension. Seeing America from the typical vantage point of a moving car window, Hopper's eye is working with a clarity superior to *Easy Rider*, and again expressing one of that film's desires - for a wild nation ready to welcome freaks.

However, such attention to the poetry of detail when the big picture stinks is the province not of major directors, but of B-movie craftsmen - and that is the level at which Hopper is now stuck. *Chasers* is clearly the film of a talented man marking time.

Nick Hasted

# Chasing the Deer

United Kingdom 1994

Director: Graham Holloway

Certificate  
PG

Distributor

Feature Film Company  
Production Company  
Cromwell Productions  
In association with  
Lamancha Productions

Executive Producers  
Rob Whitehouse

Gary Russell  
David McWhinnie

Producer

Bob Carruthers

Production Manager

Alex Carruthers

Location Manager

Pete Ross

Assistant Directors

Jeremy Freeston

James Miller

Vivienne Wynd

Screenplay

Jerome Vincent

Bob Carruthers

Steve Gillham

Based on an idea by

Michele Ayson

Script Supervisor

Lucy Sampson

Director of Photography

Alan M. Trow

Graphic Effects

Lesley Marr

Editor



1715. The aftermath of the Battle of Sheriffmuir. The Jacobite army is in retreat. Campbell and Cameron, two old Highlanders in the fray together, are ambushed by the enemy. One is killed. Thirty years later, Charles Edward Stuart, the 'Pretender', is rumoured to have arrived in Scotland and there is talk of raising an army to help him regain the throne. Alistair Campbell, who lost his father in the first Jacobite uprising, is reluctant to die for a cause he does not believe in. But he has no choice: his son Euan, in trouble for shooting a Highlander, has been kidnapped, and the only way Alistair can save his life is by enlisting himself.

Alistair does not realise that Euan is no longer a prisoner of the Jacobites, but has fallen into the hands of Government troops. Here, the boy comes under the protection of Major Elliott, an English officer who recently lost his own son. Euan is allowed to write to his mother explaining his fate, but, by the time she receives the letter, it is already too late - Alistair has already marched off to war under Bonnie Prince Charlie's standard.

The Jacobites defeat the Government forces at Dunbar and march deep into England. However, promised French reinforcements fail to arrive and there is little support for Bonnie Prince Charlie in the towns they pass through. Highlanders, disgruntled that their leader does not even speak with their own accent, begin to peel away from the army. The Jacobites reach as far as Derby, but then decide to retreat back to Scotland.

The Duke of Cumberland vows to extirpate the Jacobite menace once and for all. His soldiers pursue Bonnie Prince Charlie. Eventually, the two armies come face to face at Culloden Moor. The Highlanders fight courageously, but are routed. Alistair and Euan, father and son on opposite sides, meet on the battlefield. When Euan falls, Alistair tends him, but is himself killed by Major Elliott. Back at home, the Campbell family is left to mourn. Their one consolation is that Euan's young girlfriend, Mary, is pregnant.

You can't help but admire the producers' ambition. With finance of £460,000, much of it garnered from a small army of private investor/extras who paid to be in the film, they set out to make a full-blown historical epic. In a way, they have succeeded. There is no denying the grandeur of *Chasing the Deer*. Picturesque Scottish landscapes are shown off to fine effect. Highland chiefs strut around as on leave from Henry Raeburn oil paintings. Interior scenes, such as Bonnie Prince Charlie's Ball at Hollyrood Palace, are lavishly designed and lit. The Battle of Culloden itself is a stirring affair, shot on a scale that belies the movie's miniscule budget.

Unfortunately, despite the pound-stretching ingenuity that went into its making, *Chasing the Deer* is history by numbers. Stilted, ponderous and often

poorly acted, it fails to instil much vigour or drama into its account of the 1745 uprising. As the Pretender and his Generals sit around tables, laboriously arguing over their strategy, or dignitaries sip sherry and discuss the Jacobites' prospects, the story takes on the air of a rather pedantic illustrated lecture, with characters serving as nothing more than ciphers to convey new information.

Director Graham Holloway, whose first feature this is, is a documentary-maker by trade, and one sometimes one gets the impression he doesn't realise he is allowed to move the camera. In many scenes involving dialogue, he opts for static frontal framing. He is not helped by a script which simply trots through the uprising in chronological fashion, using the unhappy experiences of an ordinary family caught in the middle of the conflict as a counterpoint to the wider historical perspective. Frequent recourse to captions underlines the lack of visual flair and occasionally verges on the ridiculous: an establishing shot of Edinburgh Castle - surely a familiar enough landmark not to require further clarification - carries the logo, "Edinburgh, capital of Scotland".

We're offered a mildly revisionist reading of the events surrounding Culloden. Touted in the publicity as "the film every Scot must see", *Chasing the Deer* makes it clear that lowlanders, prosperous business folk and the like, had no enthusiasm for joining Bonnie Prince Charlie's ragged Highland army. The Pretender himself is portrayed as a dithering, effete fop with a Clouseau-like French accent rather than as the dashing hero of myth, and the Jacobite uprising is seen as doomed from the start. Anti-English sentiment is kept in check. Indeed, arguably the most sympathetic character in the film is the English officer Major Elliott (played with typical blustering enthusiasm by Brian Blessed), while probably the least sympathetic is die-hard Jacobite, Angus Cameron (scowling rock star Fish). Even Butcher Cumberland, who was guilty of genocide in the Highlands, comes off relatively lightly; as embodied by Dominic Borrelli, he is porcine and pompous, but hardly a monster. Causes are blurred and the real message the film seems to preach is that wars hurt the poor and innocent, but help fathers to bond with their sons.

While it is certainly a relief to get away from what Fitzroy Maclean has described as the "rose-coloured, whisky advertisement" approach to Scottish history, there is still more than a hint that the film-makers are using the Highlands as a glorified theme park. With a title borrowed from a Burns poem, plenty of claymore rattling and miles of tartan on display, *Chasing the Deer* offers a heritage-museum vision of the Jacobite uprising in which the story itself, whatever the interpretation of the Pretender's role, is secondary to the costumes and scenery.

**Geoffrey Macnab**

## D2: The Mighty Ducks

USA 1994

Director: Sam Weisman

**Certificate**  
U

**Distributor**  
Buena Vista  
**Production Company**  
Walt Disney Pictures

**Executive Producer**  
Doug Claybourne

**Producers**  
Jordan Kerner  
Jon Avnet

**Co-producers**  
Steven Brill  
Salli Newman

**Production Supervisor**  
Clifford L. Rogers

**Production Co-ordinators**  
Nancy Jane King  
Marcia Warwick

**Unit Production Managers**  
James D. Brubaker  
Doug Claybourne

**Location Managers**  
Andrew Comins  
Minneapolis:

**Post-production**  
Co-ordinator  
Robert Graf

**Co-ordinator**  
Bruce A. Dunn II

**2nd Unit Director**  
Steve Boyum

**Assistant Directors**  
David Householter  
Chitra F. Mojtabai

**Diana Williams**  
Rocky Lane

**Casting**  
Judy Taylor  
Lynda Gordon

**Voice:**  
Mickie McGowan

**Associate:**  
Amy L. Klein

**Screenplay**  
Steven Brill

**Based on characters**  
created by Steven Brill

**Script Supervisor**  
Nita Boyum

**Director of Photography**  
Mark Irwin

**2nd Unit Director**  
of Photography  
Joel King

**Optical Photography**  
James Mann

**Animation Photography**  
Allen Gonzales

**Skate Camera Operator**  
Bruce Benedict

**Optical Effects Supervisor**  
Mark Dornfeld

**Optical Line-up**  
Bill Aylsworth

**Editors**  
Eric Sears  
John F. Link

**Production Designer**  
Gary Fruttkoff

**Art Director**  
Dawn Snyder

**Set Decorator**  
Kathryn Peters

**Set Dressers**  
Karin L. McGaughey

**Cory Schubert**  
Stephen J. Readmond

**Minneapolis:**  
Troy Eastlack

**Scenic Artists**  
John W. Snow  
Chris Barnes

**Minneapolis:**  
Anne Hyvarinen

**Storyboard Artist**  
Michael Sarley

**Special Effects**  
Co-ordinators  
John E. Gray

**Minneapolis:**  
Paul Murphy

**Special Effects**  
John R. Ziegler

**Costume Design**  
Grania Preston

**Costume Supervisor**  
Lynda Foote

**Make-up**  
June Rudley Brickman

**Hairstylists**  
Lynn Del Kail  
Kim Carrillo

**Title Design**  
Burke Mattsson

**Titles/Opticals**  
Buena Vista Imaging

**Music**  
J.A.C. Redford

**Orchestrations**  
Thomas Pasatieri

**Eric Schmidt**  
Steve Bernstein

**Carl Johnson**  
Greg Smith

**Gordon Goodwin**  
John Graham

**Supervising Music Editor**  
Michael T. Ryan

**Music Consultants**  
Evyen Klean

**Songs/Music Extracts**  
Paul Broucek

**"This Too Will Pass"**  
by and performed

by Peter Himmelman;

"Let's Work Together"

by Wilbert Harrison,

performed by Dwight

Yoakam; "Mr Big Stuff"

by Joseph Broussard,

Ralph Williams,

Carrol Washington,

performed by Martha

Wash; "Doo-Wop

Paganini" by Kevin

Womack, Bryant

Woodert, Adam

Labaud, performed

by Suave; "Everything's

On Fire" by Andrew

Arashiba, Dacey

Arashiba, Benjamin

Craig, performed by

Bone Club; "You Ain't

Seen Nothing Yet"

by Randy Bachman,

performed by The

Poorboys; "Rock and

Roll (Part Two)" by

Michael Leander,

Gary Glitter, performed

by Gary Glitter; "Good

Stuff" by Kate Pierson,

Fred Schneider, Keith

Strickland, performed

by The B-52's;

"Whoopi! (There it Is)"

by S. Gibson, C. Glenn,

M. Bonsante, S. Pulga,

L. Ninzatte, performed

by Tag Team; "We Will

Rock You" by Brian

May; "We Are the

Champions" by Freddie

Mercury, performed

by Queen; "Rock the

Pond" by Michael

Coleman, Dan

Friedman, performed

by John Bisaha; "Proud

to be Loud" by and

performed by Marc

Ferrari; "Olympic

Spirit" by Vincent

Frates, Arden Hofheins,

Randy Thornton;

"Original Mighty Ducks

Theme" by David

Newman;

"Anvil Chorus" (from

"Il Trovatore") by

Giuseppe Verdi

**Supervising Sound Editor**  
Robert L. Shepton

**Sound Editors**

Kurt N. Forshager

Fred Judkins

Scott Weber

Dialogue:

Charles E. Smith

**Supervising ADR Editor**

C.T. Welch

**ADR Editors**

Darrell Hanzalik

Beth Bergeron

Robert Heffernan

Joe Mayer

**Foley Editor**

Phil Hess

**Sound Mixer**

David Kelson

**Music Recordist**

Andy Bass

**ADR Mixer**

Doc Kane

**Foley Mixer**

David Gertz

**Sound Re-recordists**

John Reitz

Dave Campbell

Greg Rudloff

**Foley Artists**

James Moriana

Jeffrey Wilhoit

**Hockey Technical Adviser**

Jack White

**Duck Wrangler**

Erica J. Spano

**Cast**

Emilio Estevez

Gordon Bombay

Kathryn Erbe

Michele

Michael Tucker

Tibbles

Jan Rube[a]

Jan

Carsten Norgaard

Wolf

Maria Ellingsen

Marria

Joshua Jackson

Charlie

Elden Ryan Ratliff

Fulton

Shaun Weiss

Goldberg

Mat Boherty

Averman

Brandon Adams

Jesse

Garrett Ratliff Henson

Guy

Marguerite Moreau

Connie

Vincent A. Larusso

Banks

Colombe Jacobsen

Julie

Aaron Lohr

Portman

Ty O'Neal

Dwayne

**Kenan Thompson**

Russ

Mike Vitar

Luis

Justin Wong

Ken

Scott Whyte

Gunnar

Kai Lennox

Olaf

Vicellous Reon Shannon

James

Noah Verdusco

Hector

Marcus Klomp

Fanger

Jon Karl Hjelm

Norbert

Michael Doms

McGill

Casey Carven

Larson

Brock Pierce

Young Gordon

Robert Pail

Young Gordon's Father

Kareem Abdul-Jabbar

Cam Neely

Chris Chelios

Luc Robitaille

Greg Louganis

Kristi Yamaguchi

Celebrities at Party

Leah Lail

Terry at Party

Wayne Gretzky

Himself

Jeanette Kerner

Mary Brill

Women at Boutique

Jack White

Michael Francis Kelly

Referees at Games

Bob Miller

Game Announcer

Joe Fowler

Reporter at Anaheim

Harve Cook

Trinidad Coach

Rodney Louis Johnson

Mr Alley Oop

Laura Lombardi

Photo Shoot

Art Director

Nancy Stephens

Tajsha Thomas

Coliseum Reporters

Kevin Womack

Bryant Woodert

Adam A. Labaud Jr

Doo-Wop Singers





Quack therapy: Emilio Estevez

Taunted by Russ, a young spectator from South Central LA, the team accept a challenge to play his team at a roller blade version of the sport on an inner city recreation ground, picking up several valuable tips in the process.

Gordon meanwhile is persuaded by Jan that team spirit, not the simple desire to win, is the main thing that counts. Reinvigorated, team and coach – with the addition of Russ, who specialises in a unique style of spinning shot – go on to play Iceland again in the tournament final. The game goes on to penalties and when Iceland's final shot is saved, victory goes to 'Team USA'.

Hollywood sports movies depressingly proffer the same plot over and over again: the underdogs gradually get themselves organised and win against a ruthless opposition, victory inevitably being achieved in the closing moments of the game. In the process, these films fulsomely assert the cliché that it's not the winning but the taking part that counts, and the cynical notion that nice guys finish last is replaced by the cosy idea that perhaps they can finish first after all. That's Hollywood and that, above all, is the Disney world view. Seasoned filmgoers may long have tried of this formula, but a new generation of easily-pleased youngsters emerges every few years to avidly consume the same recipe over and over again.

The original *The Mighty Ducks* – retitled *Champions* for UK release – adhered to this structure, delivering a lively ration of slapstick humour, crisply-edited rink action and wide-eyed homilies. This threadbare sequel regurgitates the same scenario on a larger, international stage. The result is a ludicrous display of xenophobic Americanism. The nice guys finish first, but only when they're American, and the bad guys reside in, of all places, Iceland. In years gone by, the USSR and East Germany would have been the prime sporting targets against which to define heroic American prowess. With the end of the Cold War and the opening of these markets to its product, the Disney marketing team obviously picked on Iceland not only for its metaphorical aptness, but because of its tiny population – and hence minimal potential for lost revenue.

This pantomime level of villainy is the most revealing indication of the film's steadfast refusal to engage with any recognisable reality, sporting, social or otherwise. In their neo-fascist black outfits, these ice stormtroopers

represent everything soulless, militaristic and supposedly un-American. By contrast, the easy-going Americans depend on teamwork for their success. Always referred to as 'Team USA', the group triumphs only when it learns to bond together and switches its USA shirts for their (trademarked) *Mighty Ducks* outfits. With the team's too obviously careful ethnic and geographical balance, this is a patriotic fantasia that wouldn't have been out of place at the height of World War Two – especially the scene where the kids proudly stand up in turn and announce which states they're from. The message is that natural talent, positive thinking and team spirit can overcome any disadvantage. But it can only sustain that message by not actually showing us any disadvantages: the kids are never more than smiling ethnic and geographical ciphers who exist in a social and economic vacuum. Russ takes the team back to south Central LA, but we never see his parents or home environment.

The characters remain no more than limp mouthpieces for the film's Horatio Alger view of the world; also lost is any sense of sport as an activity involving luck, huge variations of skill and the possibility of losing on a regular basis. There is a queasy undercurrent to all the noisy statement, which suggests that this USA is a fundamentally insecure place which needs its enemies to define its identity much more than it needs its friends. The original *The Mighty Ducks* at least provided some token social context for Bombay and his child players. That film's moral trajectory saw him casting off his grasping yuppie pretensions and passing on to the values of teamwork and solidarity to his young charges – values embodied in the team's war cry, "Ducks fly together!" Here he is once more seduced by materialism, confronts another nasty coach, and makes good when he's reminded yet again of his late father's ideals.

The film's double-edged attitude to sponsorship and business is also revealing. In its wish-fulfilment world, they are presented as innately dangerous, and yet in real life the Disney organisation has itself created a professional ice hockey team, the *Mighty Ducks*, to promote these two films and sundry merchandising spin-offs. It's a significant new stage in the bland Disneyfication of the American dream – the proud individualism and ruthless killer instinct of the Bald Eagle is implicitly replaced as national symbol by a gullible, gregarious and non-threatening fowl. As Bombay keeps saying, ducks do fly together. But they also tend to get shot down in huge numbers by greedy hunters who lure them to their doom with decoy quacker whistles. Early in the film, Jan gives Bombay a quacker whistle which is presented as a kind of mystic talisman. Interpret that whistle as a symbol of how business and the media manipulate and mould society to profit-driven ends, and the film is much more truthful than it can know.

**Tom Tunney**

## Even Cowgirls Get the Blues

USA 1993

Director: Gus Van Sant

### Certificate

15

### Distributor

Rank

### Production Company

New Line Cinema/

Fourth Vision

### Producer

Laurie Parker

### Line Producer

Eric McLeod

### Associate Producer

Mary Ann Marino

### Production Co-ordinators

Beth Depatie

NY:

Tom Forrest

### Unit Production Manager

Eric McLeod

### Location Manager

Sara Burton

### Post-production Supervisors

Leslie Leitner

Susan Dupre

### Assistant Directors

Phillip Criston

Shino Ito

David Minkowski

### Casting

Pagano Bialy Manwiller

### Screenplay

Gus Van Sant Jr

Based on the novel by

Tom Robbins

### Script Supervisor

Jane Goldsmith

### Directors of Photography

John Campbell

Eric Alan Edwards

### Special Visual Effects Supervisor

Chel White

### Snake Animation

Schell Hickel

### Editor

Curtiss Clayton

### Associate Editor

Amy E. Duddleston

### Production Designer

Missy Stewart

### Art Director

Dan Self

### Set Decorator

Nina Bradford

### Set Dressers

Damon Baird Sullivan

Sean Robert Fong

Jennifer Pray

Phred Palmer

### Scenic Artists

Cathy Young

Casa Babbs

Malia Jensen

Sue Hutchins

### Snake/Bat Sculptures

Jane Clugston

### Special Effects Co-ordinator

Jim Doyle

### Special Effects

Morgan Guynes

### Prosthetic Thumb

Steve Johnson's XFX

### Costume Design

Beatrix Aruna Pasztor

### Make-up

Leonard MacDonald

Design:

Gina Monaci

### Hair Design

Gina Monaci

### Title Design

Michael Hinton

### Cupid and Psyche Sequence

Art Director:

Tom Bonauro

Producer:

Lucy Phillips

Stylist:

Alexis Leach

Wings:

Pierre Trudeau

Hair/Make-up:

Anne Morgan

### Backdrop:

Peter Nye

Model Cupid:

Jade Semi-Precious

Model Psyche:

Sarah Grigis

### Music

k.d. lang

Ben Mink

### Music performed by

Vocals/Guitars:

k.d. lang

Guitars/Strings:

Ben Mink

Keyboards/Accordion:

Teddy Borowiecki

Steel Guitars:

Greg Leisz

Basses:

Jeff Berlin

Les July

Mike Lent

Dennis Marcenko

David Pilch

Drums:

Randall Stoll

Percussion:

Mark Ramaer

Greg Wells

Wah Guitar:

Dean Parks

Banjo:

Chris Stephens

Flute:

Stephen Kujala

Trumpet:

Ann Patterson

Alto Sax:

Lincoln Adler

Trombone:

Tom Ralls

Baritone Sax:

Annie King

Cello:

John Friesen

### Executive Music Producer

Toby Emmerich

### Music Supervisor

Larry Wanasas

### Songs

"Just Keep Me Moving",

"Much Finer Place",

"Or Was I", "Hush

Sweet Lover", "Apogee",

"Virtual Vortex",

"Lifted By Love",

"Overture", "Kundalini

Yoga Waltz", "In

Perfect Dreams",

"Curious Soul Astray",

"Ride of Bonanza

Jellybean", "Cowgirl

Pride" by k.d. lang,

Ben Mink, "Myth"

by k.d. lang, Teddy

Borowiecki, "Don't Be

a Lemming Polka" by

k.d. lang, "Sweet

Cherokee" by Russ

Hull, Gloria Gordon,

Jimmy Weir,

performed by k.d. lang;

"Happy Trails" by Dale

Evans, performed by

Victoria Williams;

"Happy Birthday to

You" by Mildred J. Hill,

Patty S. Hill, performed

by Ken Kesey, Ken

Babbs, Grace Zabriskie;

"Cheso Fresco" by Lee

Bradford, Holly Little,

performed by Palante;

"Ma belle amie" by

Peter Tetterod, Hans

van Eijch, performed

by The TeeSet; "This

Guy's in Love With

You" by Burt

Bacharach, Hal David,

"A Taste of Honey"

by Robert Scott, Ric

Marlow, performed

by Herb Alpert & The

Tijuana Brass;

"Nashville Cats"

by John Sebastian, performed by The Lovin' Spoonful; "Jackson" by Jerry Leiber, Billy Edd Wheeler, performed by Nancy Sinatra, Lee Hazelwood; "Sugar Town" by Lee

Hazelwood, performed by Nancy Sinatra; "Give up the Funk (Tear the Roof off the Sucker)" by George Clinton Jr.,

Bootsy Collins, Jerome Brailey, performed by P-Funk All-Stars Live; "String Quartet in C Minor" by Claude

Debussy, performed by Hollis Taylor, Lori Prestons, Lorati Bryam, Karen Bryam

**Choreography** Ruby Burns  
**Jann Dryer**  
**Sound Design/Supervising Sound Editor** Kelly Baker

**Sound Editors** Greg Appleton  
**David A. Cohen**  
**Bauer** E. Larry Oatfield  
**John Verbeck**  
**Malcolm Fife**

**Sound Mixer** Jon Hux  
**Sound Mixer/Recordist** Mark Ramaer  
**ABA Recordist** W. Wayne Woods

**Foley Mixer** Eric Thompson  
**Foley Recordist** Jim Pasque  
**Sound Re-records** Leslie Shatz

**Davis Parker**  
**Don White**  
**Foley Artists** Margie O'Malley  
**Jennifer Myers**  
**Weapon Consultant** J.W. Koch

**Stunt Co-ordinator** Jake Crawford  
**Snake Wrangler** Mary Esther Hart

**Cast** Uma Thurman  
**Sissy Hankshaw**  
**John Hurt** The Countess

**Rain Phoenix**  
**Bonanza Jellybean**  
**Noriyuki "Pat" Morita**  
**The Chink**  
**Keanu Reeves**

**Julian Gitche**  
**Lorraine Bracco**  
**DeLores Del Ruby**  
**Angie Dickinson**  
**Miss Adrian**

**Sean Young**  
**Marie Barth**  
**Crispin Glover**  
**Howard Barth**

**8,660 feet**  
**96 minutes**

**Dolby stereo**  
**In colour**  
**AlphaCine**  
**Prints by**  
**Kodak**

**Born in the American South with abnormally large thumbs, Sissy Hankshaw grows up through the 1950s to become both a beautiful woman and the world's greatest hitchhiker. Aged 16, she runs away from home and exults in the freedom of movement her primary digit brings her. Despite the perils and temptations of the road, she reaches her late 20s still technically a virgin. In one of the obscure spots where she picks up mail, she gets a letter from New York, from The Countess, the Mississippi transsexual feminine hygiene tycoon who has employed her as a model – The Yoni-Yum dew girl. The Countess wants Sissy to meet Julian Gitche, a handsome young Native American artist and a worthy prospective mate; but he succumbs**

**Ed Begley Jr**  
**Rupert**  
**Carol Kane**  
**Cowgirl Carla**  
**Victoria Williams**  
**Cowgirl Debbie**  
**Dee Fowler**  
**Cowgirl Kym**  
**Arlene Wewa**  
**Cowgirl Big Red**  
**Judy Robinson**  
**Cowgirl Gloria**  
**Heather Graham**  
**Cowgirl Heather**  
**Betsy Roth**  
**Cowgirl Mary**  
**Heather Hershey**  
**Cowgirl Donna**  
**Roseanne Arnold**  
**Madame Zoe**  
**Buck Henry**  
**Dr Dreyfus**  
**Alan Arnold**  
**Lionel**  
**Ken Kesey**  
**Sissy's Daddy**  
**Ken Babbs**  
**Sissy's Uncle**  
**Grace Zabriskie**  
**Mrs Hankshaw**  
**Michael Parker**  
**Pilgrim Driver**  
**Suzanne Solgot**  
**Scott Patrick Green**  
**Pilgrims**  
**Udo Kier**  
**Commercial Director**  
**Tom Peterson**  
**Crewman**  
**Wade Evans**  
**Cameraman**  
**Oliver Kirk**  
**Sheriff**  
**Greg McMickle**  
**FBI Agent**  
**Treya Jeffrey**  
**Young Sissy**  
**Alexa**  
**Rubber Rose Bird**  
**Expert**  
**Eric Hull**  
**White House**  
**Undersecretary**  
**Joe Ivy**  
**FBI Director**  
**Lin Shaye**  
**Rubber Rose Maid**  
**Chel White**  
**Brain Surgeon**  
**Molly Little**  
**Salsa Singer**  
**Sherry Alps**  
**Eliza Butterfly**  
**Boo Connolly**  
**Stacey Ryder**  
**Tina Knaggs**  
**Cowgirls**  
**William Burroughs**  
**Himself**  
**Tom Robbins**  
**Narrator**

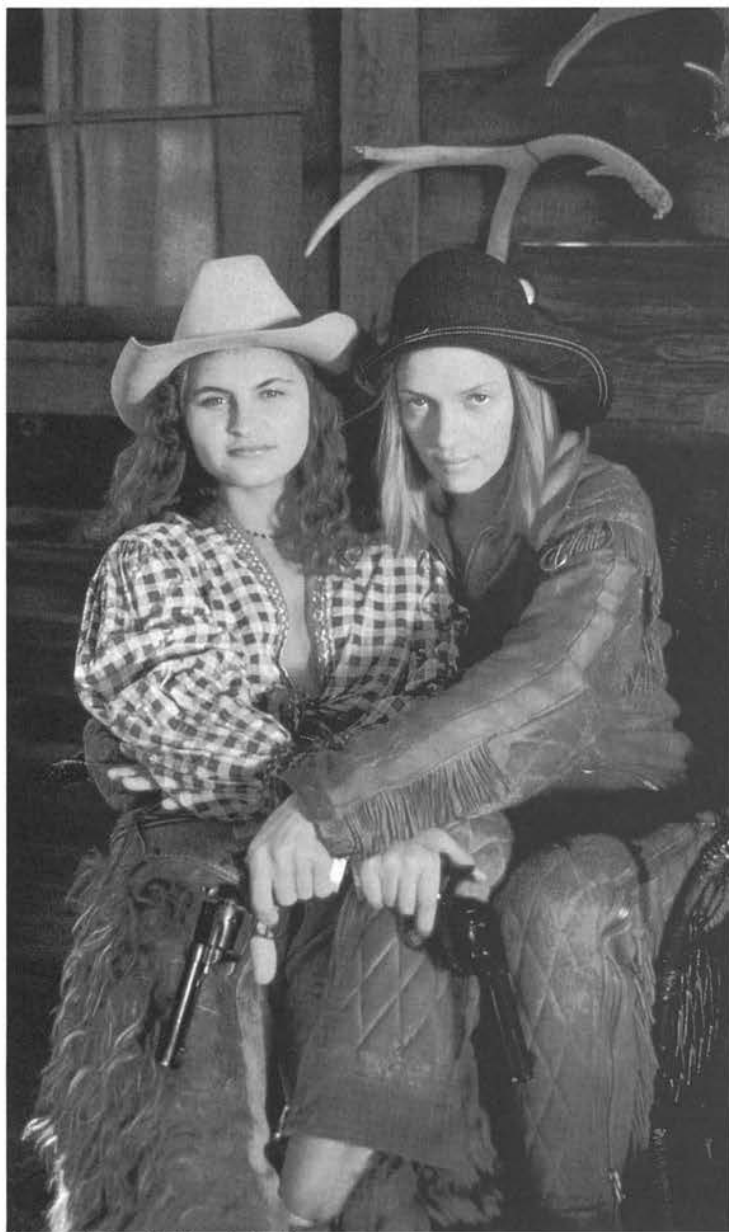
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**96 minutes**

**Dolby stereo**  
**In colour**  
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**Scott Patrick Green**  
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**Udo Kier**  
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**Tom Peterson**  
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**Cameraman**  
**Oliver Kirk**  
**Sheriff**  
**Greg McMickle**  
**FBI Agent**  
**Treya Jeffrey**<





Rancho notorious: Rain Phoenix, Uma Thurman

◀ to an asthma attack on being introduced to her, leaving Sissy to be partially debauched by two of his louche friends.

Sissy sets off for The Countess' Rubber Rose Ranch health farm at the Western end of the Dakotas to film a commercial for him. There she finds a rebellious group of cowgirls – led by the delectable Bonanza Jellybean and inspired by the peyote visions of whip-cracking Delores Del Ruby – and the Chink, a mysterious and lecherous Chinese seer who lives in a cave, guarding a time machine. With the aid of a powerful show of feminine unhygiene, the Cowgirls take over the Ranch, and Sissy and Bonanza Jellybean become lovers.

On her travels again, Sissy (who has one thumb amputated but continues to hitchhike with the other) keeps in touch with Jellybean and the Ranch by letter. Fed brown rice and then peyote buttons by sympathetic ranchers, the last surviving flock of American whooping cranes have extended their annual migratory stop-over at the Rubber Rose, and Sissy returns there to find an armed stand-off developing between the ranchers and the federal

authorities. Inspired by the last of Delores' peyote visions, the ranchers decide to give in peacefully, but Bonanza Jellybean is shot and killed in the act of surrender. The cranes fly away. After a suitable period of mourning, Sissy sets up house with Delores and The Chink, and has The Chink's baby.

“The idea of cowgirls prevails in our culture,” Bonanza Jellybean observes to Sissy Hankshaw in an analytical moment. “Therefore, it seems to me, the fact of cowgirls should prevail. Otherwise we're being ripped off again.” Who can now deny the prophetic nature of Tom Robbins' writing? These lines were penned almost two decades before *Bad Girls*.

Even *Cowgirls Get the Blues* was originally conceived by its author as a screenplay for a low-budget film, but Robbins' journey to the screen has been anything but an easy ride. In the early 80s, Shelley Duvall owned the rights and tried in vain to get the film made with herself in the lead role. Then Gus Van Sant's big Hollywood breakthrough version had to be re-edited –

an unexpected ravine in a steady upward career slope – after less than rapturous receptions at last year's Toronto and Venice film festivals. Now *Even Cowgirls* is finally here, a year after the release of k.d. lang and Ben Mink's superb soundtrack might have drawn people in to see it, and the general feeling seems to be that the whole idea of the film promised more than it could deliver. Van Sant has clearly learned this lesson, having already gone on to make a Nicole Kidman vehicle, *2 Die 4*.

What remains is an authentically picaresque cameo movie – a sort of *Those Magnificent Men in Their Flying Machines* relaunched as eco-feminist horse-opera. There's William Burroughs, looking around as he crosses the street and observing (appropriately enough, as things turn out), “ominous”; there's Roseanne as Madame Zoe telling Sissy's future (“There will be vimmen – lots of vimmen”); and that is only the beginning. It is possible to have enough of trying to spot Buck Henry, though, and the celebrity overload turns out to be rather gratuitous in view of the high calibre of the lead casting.

Uma Thurman as Sissy (described in the book by The Countess as having a mouth “like a mink's vagina at the height of the rut”) and Rain Phoenix as Jellybean, that “bundle of wild muscle and baby fat”, seem to have emerged straight from Robbins' pages. Phoenix's exuberant performance is not overshadowed by the idea of her brother as Mike in *My Own Private Idaho*, but the rest of the film is. Campfire intimacies, road-warriorhood, same-sex bonding, the central character who is so much an object that he or she becomes a subject – all these elements were integral to Van Sant's previous film too, and that one, for all its Shakespearean indulgences, hung together rather better.

Even *Cowgirls'* sombre dedication – “For River” – poignantly undermines the original story's simple faith in sexual and narcotic salvation (cf. the whooping cranes: “the peyote mellowed them out”). That sort of innocence has been if not lost for ever, at least tainted with fear, and even a filmmaker of Van Sant's skill and power cannot whiten that stain out. Steps have however been taken in the re-editing process to soften the impact of the film's other stand-out 70s anomaly – the profoundly irritating hokey mysticism of Noriyuki “Pat” Morita's benighted “Chink”. He is still profoundly irritating, but at least not for so long now.

Rarely in a literary adaptation have an author's voice and vision come through so clearly (Robbins even narrates his own epigrams: “the brown paper bag is the only thing civilised man has produced that does not seem out of place in nature”) and yet to so muddled an overall effect. And never has a book supplied a better epitaph for its cinematic incarnation: “Playfulness ceases to serve a serious purpose when it takes itself too seriously.”

Ben Thompson

## Junior

USA 1994

Director: Ivan Reitman

### Certificate

PG

### Distributor

UIP

### Production Company

Northern Lights

Enterprises

### Executive Producers

Joe Medjuck

Daniel Goldberg

Beverly J. Cambe

### Co-executive Producer

Chris Conrad

### Producer

Ivan Reitman

### Co-producers

Neal Nordlinger

Gordon Webb

### Associate Producer

Sheldon Kahn

### Production Co-ordinator

Andrew Francis Fenady

### Unit Production Manager

Gordon Webb

### Location Manager

George M. Agnew

### 2nd Unit Director

Daniel Goldberg

### Assistant Directors

David Sosna

Carl Goldstein

Ira Stanley Rosenstein

Matthew T. Weiner

Robert J. Wilson

David A. Ticotin

### 2nd Unit:

Ira Stanley Rosenstein

Michael Neumann

### Casting

Michael Chinich

Alan Berger

Shane Liem-Jacobson

New York:

Bonnie Finnegan

### Screenplay

Kevin Wade

Chris Conrad

### Script Supervisor

Judith Saunders

### Director of Photography

Adam Greenberg

### 2nd Unit Director of Photography

Earl L. Clark

### Aerial Photography

David Nowell

### Camera Operators

Bill Roe

Moshe Levin

### Steadicam Operators

Liz Ziegler

David Luckenbach

### Visual Effects

Buena Vista Visual

Effects

### Supervisor:

Peter Montgomery

### Producer:

Lyndon Lemon

### Camera Operators:

Eric Peterson

Harry Alpert

### Editors

Sheldon Kahn

Wendy Greene

Bricmont

### Production Designer

Stephen Lineweaver

### Art Director

Gary Wissner

### Set Design

Barry Chusid

Dawn Snyder

### Set Decorator

Clay A. Griffith

### Set Dressers

Greg Wilkinson

John H. Maxwell

Edward J. McCarthy III

Brana Rosenfeld

Elizabeth Ragagli

### Production Illustrators

Daren Dochterman

Mentor Huebner

### Special Effects Co-ordinator

David M. Blitstein

### Additional Special Effects

David L. Simmons

Gary Schaedler

Erik Haraldsted

### Costume Design

Albert Wolsky

### Costume Supervisor

Robert Q. Mathews

Mari Grimaud

### Make-up

Joseph W. McKinney

Ve Neill

Valli O'Reilly

### Special Make-up

Effects/Prosthetics

Matthew W. Mungle

Russell Seifert

John E. Jackson

2nd Unit

Make-up/Hairstylist:

Mariann Ybarra

### Hairstylists

Peter Tothpal

Yolanda Toussieng

### Titles/Opticals

Pacific Title

### Music

James Newton Howard

### Music Conductor

Artie Kane

### Orchestrations

James Newton Howard

Brad Dechter

Chris Boardman

### Music Editor

Jim Weidman

### Songs/Music Extracts

“I've Got You Under My

Skin” by Cole Porter,

performed by

1) Cassandra Wilson,

2) Frank Sinatra, Bono;

“Are You in the Mood”

by Stéphane Grappelli,

Django Reinhardt,

performed by

Stéphane Grappelli;

“Little Warm Death”

by and performed by

Cassandra Wilson;

“Look What Love Has

Done” by Carol Bayer

Sager, James Newton

Howard, James

Ingram, Patty Smyth,

performed by Patty

Smyth

### Choreography

Marguerite Derricks

### Supervising Sound Editors

Larry Kemp

Per Hallberg

### Dialogue Editors

Patrick Foley

Dan Rich

Christopher Assells

Chris Hogan

Sarah Rothenberg

Goldsmith

### Supervising ADR Editor

Dick Friedman

### ADR Editor

Bill Voigtlander

### ADR Group Co-ordinator

Leigh French

### Foley Editors

Craig Jaeger

Lou Kleinman

### Sound Mixer

Gene Steven

Cantamessa

### ADR Mixer

Alan Holly

### Music Recordist/Mixer

Shawn Murphy

### Re-recording Mixers

Steve Maslow

Gregg Landaker

### Sound Effects Editors

Scott Martin Gershin

Jay B. Richardson

Peter Michael Sullivan

Jeffrey Rosen

Frank Smathers

### Foley Artists

Ellen Heuer

Chris Moriana



#### Technical Advisers

Richard B. Buyalos  
Charles B. Gassner  
Barry Herman  
David Hill  
Stunt Co-ordinator  
Joel Kramer  
Animal Trainers  
Bob Dunn  
Paul A. Calabria

#### Cast

**Arnold Schwarzenegger**  
Dr Alexander Hesse  
**Danny DeVito**  
Dr Larry Arbogast  
**Emma Thompson**  
Dr Diana Reddin  
**Frank Langella**  
Noah Banes  
**Pamela Reed**  
Angela  
**Judy Collins**  
Naomi  
**James Eckhouse**  
Ned Sneller  
**Aida Turturro**  
Louise  
**Welker White**  
Jenny  
**Megan Cavanagh**  
Willow  
**Merle Kennedy**  
Samantha  
**Mindy Seeger**  
Alice  
**Christopher Meloni**  
Mr Lanza  
**Antoinette Peragine**  
Mrs Lanza  
**Cassandra Wilson**  
Singer  
**Ellen McLaughlin**  
Chairwoman (F.D.A.)  
**Stefan Gierasch**  
Edward Sawyer  
**Alexander Enberg**  
Arthur  
**Judy O'Vitz**  
Stewardess  
**Kevin West**  
Ira Newborn  
Lyndon Executives  
**Misa Koprova**  
Lyndon Receptionist  
**Jodi Knotts**  
Michelle Abrams  
Waiting Room Women  
**John Pinette**  
Clerk  
**Fred Stoller**  
Waiter  
**Kathleen Chalfant**  
Anna Gunn  
Casitas Madres  
Receptionists  
**Lisa Sommer**  
Kristina Hardee  
Casitas Madres  
Exercise Attendants  
**Leah Teweles**  
Mrs Logan

#### Maggie Han

Lab Assistant  
**Charmaine Alicia Mancil**  
Scanner Guard  
**Lawrence Tierney**  
Matt Mulhern  
Movers  
**Chris Pray**  
**John Yang**  
**Sara Peery**  
**Jan Yanehiro**  
**Dennis O'Donnell**  
**Beth Campbell Fitzgerald**  
Reporters  
**Lawrence T. Wrentz**  
Campus Security Guard  
**Brianna and Brittany McConnell**  
"Junior"  
**Ryan and Zachary Boss**  
"Jake"  
**Christian and Kieran Giammichele**  
Library Baby  
**Monika Schnarre**  
Angelic Nurse  
**Allen Walls**  
Banquet Waiter  
**Kevin Sifeantes**  
Banquet Valet  
**Tom Dugan**  
Lobster Man  
**Holly Wortell**  
Lobster Woman  
**Susan Bills**  
**Maggie Myers Davidson**  
Campus Gals  
**Peter Chen**  
Taxi Driver  
**Dean Jacobson**  
Turd  
**Mary Gordon Murray**  
Betty  
**Julie Vasquez**  
Ticket Agent  
**Dayna Winston**  
Stewardess at  
Boarding Gate  
**Brandon Ross**  
**Lonnie Plaxico**  
**Jeff Haynes**  
**Lance Carter**  
**Charles Burnham**  
Banquet Musicians  
**Dee Hengstler**  
**Bubba Dean Rambo**  
**Daryl Richardson**  
**Jerald Vincent**  
**Nina DeNike**  
**Maurice Schwartzman**  
**Kim Wolfe**  
**Charles McGowan**  
Banquet Dancing  
Couples

9.926 feet  
110 minutes

Dolby stereo  
in colour  
Eastman

erosity. Hesse and Reddin fall in love, and he decides to tell her of the condition that he has been successfully hiding. Initially angry, she becomes supportive, and they decide to raise the child together. When the opportunistic Banes discovers the scheme, Hesse, in full drag, checks into a home for unwed mothers, where he participates in all of the women's pre-delivery activities. Trying to appropriate the men's accomplishment, Banes calls the media to the delivery room, but the press find only Arbogast's pregnant (by Aerosmith's personal trainer) ex-wife Angela, with whom he is affecting a reconciliation. Arbogast delivers Hesse's baby by caesarean section, while Angela, with Reddin's assistance, gives birth in the next room. A year later, the two couples - Hesse with a pregnant Reddin, Arbogast with Angela - celebrate their offspring's first birthday on the beach. Hesse and the two women propose that Arbogast carry his and Angela's next child.

Junior is clearly keyed to the mood of America. A pro-life ode to the nuclear family, Ivan Reitman's film opened in the wake of the recent conservative Republican sweep of both Congress and the Senate - and yet another assassination attempt (in Canada) on a pro-choice doctor.

The fact that a man can carry a child might be a good subject for sophisticated parody or political theatre, but here it is only a joke stretched very thin. That the man - a bespectacled, brilliant scientist with tortoiseshell rims - is portrayed by Arnold Schwarzenegger, keeps the laughs coming far longer than the script deserves. Only a film archivist could withhold yucks when he explains his torrent of tears upon watching a schmaltzy TV commercial to surrogate father Danny DeVito: "She was Daddy's little girl!" Or when, in dress and blonde wig, he clarifies the reason for his enormous size to the head of a fancy home for unwed mothers (played by 60s counter-culture folk-singing queen Judy Collins): "The East Germans

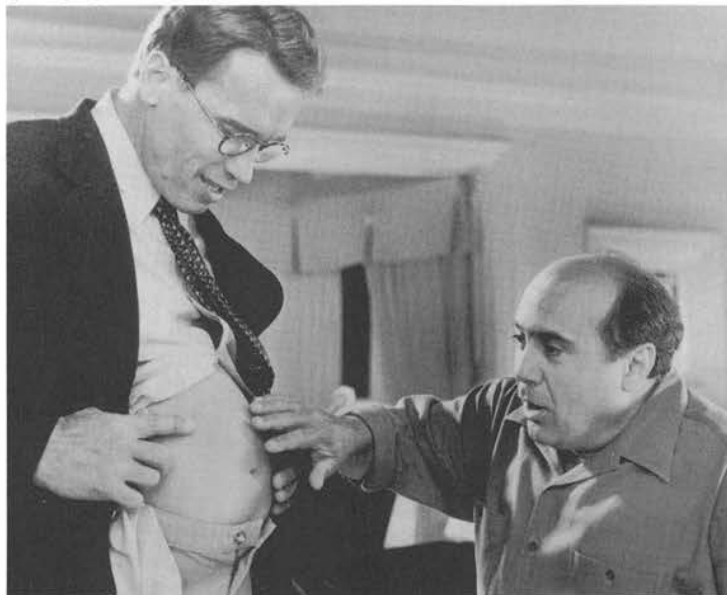
pumped up female athletes like me with anabolic steroids the way they dispense Gatorade here - but I'm all woman!"

What seems at first merely a weakly-directed movie with more than enough juvenile humour to pull in the weekend dating crowd (close-ups of oversized urine cups, references to Schwarzenegger's large load, comments like "My nipples are sensitive") soon becomes egregious. The scene in which Schwarzenegger and DeVito lovingly examine in detail a foetal sonogram smacks of the ubiquitous anti-abortion commercials ("Life: what a beautiful choice") running on American television. Conservative Republican Schwarzenegger takes on the most insulting external trappings of femininity and pseudo-wifeliness: nagging DeVito, berating his enlarged body, cooking obsessively - but the film refuses to push their relationship any further. Instead, Schwarzenegger's nascent sensitivity and his increased sexual drive lead him into an affair with fellow scientist Emma Thompson.

At first, Thompson chastises the two men for appropriating pregnancy from women, but this token feminism does not balance out the adorably bumbling traits given her (not to mention lines like "a woman's life is a nightmare"); she falls regularly, she dances with toilet paper sticking to her shoe, she flips a lobster shell onto an adjacent table in a restaurant. She is a sort of British Mary Tyler Moore who metamorphoses from a no-nonsense, quasi-masculine, trouser-attired researcher into a softly coiffed caricature of conventional womanhood.

Junior reunites the team that made *Twins*, Reitman, Schwarzenegger and DeVito. Given his more typical screen personae, it's obvious why such a passive role might appeal to Schwarzenegger, and DeVito (recently charted in *The New York Times* as one of the best-connected people in Hollywood) has never been too choosy about his parts. What is unclear is why Thompson would play such a retrograde character.

Howard Feinstein



Belly laughs: Schwarzenegger, DeVito

## Killing Zoe

USA 1994

Director: Roger Avary

**Certificate**  
18  
**Distributor**  
Rank  
**Production Company**  
A Davis Film  
production  
**Executive Producers**  
Becka Boss  
Quentin Tarantino  
Lawrence Bender  
**Producer**  
Samuel Hadida  
**Production Co-ordinator**  
Kate Axelrod  
**Unit Production Managers**  
Sara Spring Enright  
France:  
Olivier Thon  
**Location Managers**  
Garrett Grant  
France:  
Frédéric Doniguan  
Arnaud Dupont  
**Assistant Directors**  
John Vohlers  
Trey Batchelor  
Jason Roberts  
**Casting**  
Rick Montgomery  
Dan Parada  
**Screenplay**  
Roger Avary  
**Script Supervisor**  
Petra Jorgensen  
**Director of Photography**  
Tom Richmond  
**Camera Operator**  
Cris Lombardi  
**Steadicam Operators**  
Kirk R. Gardener  
Chris Haarhoff  
**Visual Effects**  
Sylvia Keulen  
**Opticals**  
Title House  
**Editor**  
Kathryn Himoff  
**Production Designer**  
David Wasco  
**Art Director**  
Charles Collum  
**Set Design**  
Michael Armani  
**Set Decorator**  
Sandy Reynolds-Wasco  
**Set Dressers**  
Michael Malone  
Patia Prouti  
**Mural Artist**  
Chris Winslow  
**Special Effects Co-ordinator**  
André G. Ellingson  
**Special Effects**  
Josh Hakian  
**Costume Design**  
Mary Claire Hannan  
**Costume Supervisor**  
Jacqueline Aronson  
**Make-up**  
Ashlee Petersen  
**Special Make-up Effects**  
Tom Savini  
**Hairstylist**  
Ashlee Petersen  
**Tattoo Artist**  
Richard Louderback  
**Music**  
Tomandandy  
**Music Production**  
Co-ordinator  
Stephanie Rubin  
**Songs/Music Extracts**  
"La Charonnette" by  
P. Philippe-Gérard,  
J. Dréjac; "Afrika" by  
and performed by  
Foula

**Supervising Sound Editor**  
John Larsen  
**Dialogue Editors**  
Susan Dudeck  
David Spence  
Ulrika Akander  
Frank Smathers  
**ADR Supervisor**  
Kimberly  
Harris-Rivolier  
**Production Sound**  
Giovanni Di Simone  
Dolby stereo  
consultant:  
Steve Smith  
**Sound Re-recording Mixers**  
Stanley Kastner  
Gary Gegan  
**Sound Effects Editors**  
John Edwards-Younger  
John Joseph Thomas  
Steve Bissinger  
**Foley Artists**  
Margie O'Malley  
Jennifer Myers  
**Loop Group**  
Barbara Harris  
**French Consultant**  
Thierry Benloulou  
**Stunt Co-ordinator**  
Al Jones

**Cast**  
**Eric Stoltz**  
Zed  
**Julie Delpy**  
Zoe  
**Jean-Hugues Anglade**  
Eric  
**Tai Thai**  
François  
**Bruce Ramsay**  
Ricardo  
**Kario Salem**  
Jean  
**Salvatore Xueeb**  
Claude  
**Gary Kemp**  
Oliver  
**Martin Raymond**  
Cab Driver  
**Eric Pascal Chaltiel**  
Bellboy  
**Cecilia Peck**  
Martina  
**Gladys Holland**  
Sub Lobby Teller  
**Gian Carlo Scanduzzi**  
Gerard Bonn  
Assistant Bank  
Managers  
**Bernard Baski**  
Michel Jean-Philippe  
Policemen  
**Elise Renée**  
Patchoo  
**Ron Jeremy Hyatt**  
Concierge  
**Chris Tragos**  
Sub Lobby Assistant  
**George Hernandez**  
Stodgy Customer  
**Richard Turner**  
American Tourist  
**Kimberly Beck**  
Customer  
**Sandra Larède**  
Teller  
**David Thompson**  
Burnt Vault Guard

8.617 feet  
96 minutes

Dolby stereo  
in colour  
CFI

San Francisco. Two men of science, cold researcher Dr. Alexander Hesse and earthy Dr. Larry Arbogast, lose university funding and facilities after the Federal Drug Administration refuses to approve Expectane, a fertility formula they have developed. Their boss and nemesis, Noah Banes, replaces them with clumsy female scientist Dr. Diana Reddin, who is working on a different fertility project for which she has frozen some of her own eggs. Arbogast unknowingly steals them and combines them with Hesse's sperm. Desperate to validate the discovery and obtain funding from a pharmaceutical company, Arbogast injects Hesse with the mixture. The two men agree that they will terminate the pregnancy after the first trimester, but Hesse, who has begun to change both emotionally and physically, insists on carrying the baby to term. They continue to use the lab on a part-time basis, due to Reddin's gen-

Zed, a young American man, arrives in Paris. En route to his hotel, he gets into conversation with his cab driver, who offers him "a wife for the night". Zed has barely booked into his room when this "wife" ►



◀ arrives. She is Zoe, a beautiful Parisian student, who works sporadically as a prostitute to pay her tuition fees. The couple make love and are developing a rapport when Eric, Zed's childhood friend, arrives. Eric unceremoniously throws Zoe out, and tries to get Zed to concentrate on the job in hand. The next day, Bastille Day, Eric and his gang are going to rob a bank; Zed is to be their safe-breaker.

Zed is taken to meet the rest of the thieves. He spends a wild evening with them, drinking and smoking heroin. They end up in a cellar watching a band play Dixieland jazz; this, Eric explains, is the real Paris. The next morning, Zed awakes feeling groggy. The gang storms the bank and takes everyone hostage, including Zoe, who has a part-time job as a bank secretary. When a cashier refuses to open the vault, he is promptly shot, as is an elderly woman employee. Zed seems shocked by this wanton violence, but sets to work in the basement, breaking the safe's combination. On the main floor of the bank, a hostage reaches for a gun and shoots two of the robbers. This provokes more bloody carnage before the gang gets matters under control again. Eric, high on drugs and adrenaline, is becoming seriously unhinged. The police, alerted to the heist, surround the building. Eric wants them to provide an aeroplane for the gang's escape, but they refuse to bargain.

Meanwhile, Zed manages to open the outer door of the vault. There is a security officer guarding the inner vault; Eric blows him up with dynamite. There is money and gold aplenty, but the chances of escaping with any of the loot seems slender. Eric decides to use Zoe as a human shield, but she grabs his machine gun and breaks free, running toward the basement. Zed and gang member Claude, on their way up, bump into her. Claude wants to shoot her, but Zed prevents him. When Eric learns what has happened, he slits Zed's face open and boots him down the stairs. The police break in and overcome the remaining gang members. Eric catches up with Zed and Zoe; the ensuing fight ends when police burst onto the scene and blow him to pieces. Zoe pretends that Zed is a bank customer and escorts him from the building. They drive off to safety.

Nicknamed a little unkindly by one French journalist as "Reservoir Frogs", *Killing Zoe* sometimes seems like a Tarantino film gone continental. With a script organised round a bungled heist, plenty of comic camaraderie between the thieves, and enough blood haemorrhaged in 96 minutes to fill a small swimming pool, it covers similar territory to Tarantino's debut (indeed, Tarantino is one of the film's executive producers). There is a basic difference, though: the action has been transplanted to Paris. Instead of Mr Blond, Mr Pink and co, we have a gang of bohemian anarchists who listen to Billie Holiday records. One even keeps a monkey as a pet.



Phallic imps: Eric Stoltz, Gary Kemp

Writer/director Roger Avary – who co-wrote *Pulp Fiction* – harnesses the elements of the conventional B-thriller, but gives them a distinctly European art-house spin. This lends to some stylistic confusion. *Killing Zoe* tries to be rarefied and downbeat at the same time. It aims for the strong narrative pulse of the typical heist caper, but also has a dilatory, improvised air. It's never quite clear whether we should take the story seriously or not.

Locations and characters are sketched in perfunctory fashion. The Paris here is the arty demi-monde of popular imagination. Zoe is the most contrived figure of all. Appearing as if out of nowhere at Zed's door, she is a composite of clichés – at once a kind-hearted prostitute, an indigent student at the school of fine arts, and a secretary at the bank which the gang plans to rob. Zed is an equally unlikely creation, a twentysomething poet-philosopher who just happens to be an expert safe-cracker. There's a suspicion that the random, muddled quality of the script, which was written in under a week, must be deliberate. It certainly lends the film a giddy sense of dislocation.

The plot creaks, but it's really nothing more than a framework for the visuals. In this department, at least, Avary is always prepared to take risks. When Zed and Zoe meet in the hotel room, their love-making is intercut with scenes from Murnau's *Nosferatu*, showing on the hotel TV. The bald, macabre-looking vampire, rising from his coffin, is treated in comic fashion as some sort of phallic imp. This little bit of self-referential, cinematic expressionism is soon followed by an even more extraordinary sequence in which Zed and the rest of the gang go on a pre-heist drink and drugs binge. They end up in a cellar, listening to a Dixieland band. In their delirium, they see cartoon notes coming out of one of the trumpets. It is the heart of the "real Paris", Eric tells Zed, but the club – decadent, smoke-filled, and full of garishly lipstick prostitutes – seems more like something out of Weimar Berlin than anything in contemporary France. Jump-cuts, distorting lenses and odd camera angles add to the

phantasmagoric quality of the scene.

Avary also quotes from more conventional sources. He shares Tarantino's jackdaw-like enthusiasm for garnering ideas and motifs from other heist movies. There are nods in the direction of everybody from Don Siegel to Godard, and the central conceit of the bungled bank siege echoes *Dog Day Afternoon*. The borrowing is perhaps at its most brazen in a splendidly ridiculous denouement which tries to out-trump *Scarface*, as Eric is caught in a fusillade of bullets. He is hit 42 times but, like Al Pacino in De Palma's film, he takes an eternity to hit the ground. His dying pirouettes are shot in comic-poetic slow motion.

Throughout the film, Avary leavens the random eruptions of violence with incongruous humour. The body count is high. Minor characters are dispatched with alacrity. When a loud-mouthed American tourist complains about being detained, he is promptly killed for such imperialist arrogance. Even the sweet-natured old woman who works in the bank is unceremoniously murdered. The siege itself is confidently handled. As Zed goes about opening the safe, the sepulchral calm in the bowels of the building makes an effective contrast to the chaos with the hostages and their trigger-happy captors above.

One thing Avary lacks, however, is Tarantino's ear for dialogue. There is none of the street patois or sense of milieu that characterised *Reservoir Dogs*. Conversation here comes in a mish-mash of French and English, and often takes on a grating veneer of pseudo-sophistication. The narrative is propelled by coincidence. It can't be said that film is about very much. The director's claims in the production notes that he is trying to portray the "nihilism" of his generation are laughable. This really isn't more than a formal exercise, but it's a virtuoso one. Exhilarating camera work, fluid direction and a gloriously overblown performance from Jean-Hugues Anglade – as a gang leader who seems modelled in equal parts on Rasputin and Al Capone – compensate for any portentousness in the script.

Geoffrey Macnab

## Love, Cheat & Steal

USA 1993

Director: William Curran

### Certificate

18

### Distributor

ITC

### Production Company

Showtime Networks, Inc.  
Motion Picture Corporation of America

### Producers

Brad Kevoy  
Steve Stabler

### Executive in Charge of Production

Steve Hewitt

### Co-producer

Chad Oman

### Line Producer

Tracie Graham

### Production Co-ordinator

Sharon Winkler

### Additional

Photography Unit:

Jean Maninger

### Production Manager

Debra Marie Simon

### Location Managers

Randy Ungar

Ross Day

### Additional

Photography Unit:

Mark Cottrell

### Post-production

Supervisors

Steve Sloan

George Gale

### Assistant Directors

Scott Cameron

Roger L. Page

Ty Arnold

Jeff Crawford

Jack Kreyov

Lars Winther

Veronica Alweiss

### Additional

Photography Unit:

Louis Race

Richard Levin

Ty Arnold

### Screenplay

William Curran

### Script Supervisors

Brenda Weisman

### Additional

Photography Unit:

Robyn Bianci

Toby Fortenza

### Director of Photography

Ken Wakeford

### Additional Photography

Janusz Kaminski

Mauro Fiore

### Aerial Photography

J. Barry Herron

### B-Camera Operator

Luc Nicknair

### Steadicam Operator

Paul Taylor

### Editor

Carole Kravetz

### Production Designer

Jane Ann Stewart

### Additional

Photography Unit:

Virginia Lee

### Art Director

David S. Lazan

### Additional

Photography Unit:

Ross Silverman

### Set Decorator

Lisa Denker

### Additional

Photography Unit:

Michelle Minon

### Set Dressers

Amy Rost

Lance Despain

### Storyboard Artist

John Coven

### Special Effects Co-ordinator

John Hartigan

### Costume Design

Dorothy Amos

### Costume Supervisors

Paul Girard

Sheila Streicek

### Make-up

Ann Pala

Laura Gorman

### Hairstylist

Peggy Hannaman

### Titles/Opticals

Cinema Research

### Corporation

### Additional Music

Arrangements

Barry Phillips

### Music Supervisor

Marcus Barone

### Music Editor

Peggy McAfee

### Songs/Music Extracts

"Grand National" by

Jack Rudy, Fran Banish,

"Sick n' Bad" by Fran

Banish, performed by

The Elder Greens;

"The Cocktail Samba",

"Loving Keys", "Piano's

a Running", "Miami

91", "It's Funeral Time"

by and performed by

Marcus Barone;

"Number 4" by and

performed by Fran

Banish; "Hot n' Heavy"

by and performed by

Messano; "Hieroglyphic

Vultures" by G. Kadane,

M. Kadane, performed

by Shaking Skinhouse;

"Daddy of Rock 'n'

Roll" by and performed

by Chomp Josephite

### Supervising Sound Editor

Paul Ratajczak

### ADR/Dialogue Editors

Tim Kirk

Brett Solomon

### ADR Recordists

Will Rogers

Richard Aronson

### Foley Recordist

Peggy McAfee

### Music Recordist/Mixer

Dan Wool

### Sound Recordists

Peter V. Meiselmann

Ken King

### Re-Recording Mixers

Paul Ratajczak

Thomas Moore

### Sound Effects Editors

Odin Benitez

Wolf Schmidt

### Stunt Co-ordinator

B.J. Davis

### Animal Trainers

Betty Linn

David Allsberry

### Cast

John Lithgow

Paul Harrington

Eric Roberts

Reno Adams

Mädchen Amick

Lauren Harrington

Richard Edson

Billy Quayle

Donald Moffat

Frank Harrington

David Ackroyd

Tom Kerry

Dan O'Herlihy

Hamilton Fisk

Jason Workman

Whit Turner

Claude Earl Jones

Mayor

Jack Axelrod

Mario Columbar

Bill McKinney

Kolchak

John Pyper Ferguson

Collins



Tom Kindle  
Convict  
Mary Fanaro  
Darlene  
Chuck Zito  
Jake  
Kathleen Beaton  
Ruthie  
Cecile Krevoy  
Woman at Party  
Jerry E. Wallace  
William  
Frances Buchsbaum  
Witchy Woman  
Jon Greene  
Mike Ornest  
Ross Crump  
Mike McConville  
Peter Lupus  
Guards  
Jerry Neilbron  
Ernie  
Ed Anders  
John Sistrunk  
Gate Guards  
Susan Lentini  
Bonnie Englehardt  
Nuns  
Said Faraj  
Clerk at 7-11  
Hugo Napier  
Bank Officer  
Stuart McKinney  
Bank Guard  
Lana Levi  
Bank Teller  
Maureen Quinn  
Barbara  
Chuck Kronberg  
Chuck  
Morgan Reed  
Christopher

Robin Swid  
Daughter  
George Christy  
Pawnbroker  
Joey Viera  
Jeff Miller  
Bullet Heads  
Danny Trajo  
Cuban  
Peter Radon  
Columbian  
Chris Waldoch  
Carlos  
Johnny Cocktails  
Daryl  
Robert Noble  
Dwayne  
Randall Kort  
Bartender  
Rick Dean  
Willy  
Brian Currie  
Chuck Franklin  
Deputies  
Daryce Richman  
Mayor's Wife  
Karen Chase  
Woman Reporter  
B.J. Davis  
Monte Perlin  
Judah Mezey  
Alfred Hitchcock  
Cops  
Melissa Oman  
Church Lady  
  
8,646 feet  
96 minutes  
  
Dolby stereo  
In colour  
Foto-kem

Reno Adams, a convicted killer, spends seven years in prison swearing deadly revenge on his former accomplice and lover for setting him up. From a newspaper article he discovers that she has just married a wealthy financial consultant, Paul Harrington. As Paul and his new wife Lauren settle in San Margherita, California, where Paul is to take over the family bank from his father, Reno and his maladjusted cellmate Billy escape from jail and head to California. Lauren returns home one day to find Reno, posing as her long-lost brother Donald, with Paul. Though she is alarmed, she does not break his cover. The next day, Reno confronts Lauren, and, after a struggle during which he all but rapes her, demands that she helps him make a killing.

Reno plunders Paul's safe, which contains the blueprint for the bank's security system. Unwittingly, Paul takes Reno on a guided tour of the bank, enabling him to check the layout. Meanwhile Paul has been alerted to irregularities at the bank by the stacks of cash in the vaults which manager Whit Turner cannot satisfactorily explain away. His suspicions are confirmed when his police chief friend Tom investigates further: Whit and old family acquaintance Hamilton Fisk, are in league with a Colombian cartel to launder drug profits through the bank. For fear of incriminating his father, Paul has no option but to do a deal.

As Reno's plans gain momentum, Lauren appears to co-operate with him, sexually as well as conspiratorially. Paul begins to have doubts about his 'brother-in-law' and Reno, Billy and Lauren come under Tom's scrutiny. The trio rob the bank, shooting Whit in order to implicate him, but Reno and

Billy are identified. When Lauren's involvement is betrayed by the earring which Reno has planted at the scene of the crime, she goes to his hideout. Reno has already eliminated Billy and is about to kill Lauren when Paul turns up and shoots her dead for deceiving him. Paul successfully pleads self-defence while the police catch up with Reno and his haul. With Tom's collusion, Paul is joined by Lauren (the bullets were blanks) and the pair sail away to a even wealthier new life. Reno ends up where he started, in a cell, brooding on vengeance.

The gap between what *Love, Cheat & Steal* promises and what it delivers is huge. On one level, it tries to stretch itself across too many different genres, encountering stylistic clashes and plot inconsistencies along the way. The title sequence maps out, in grainy black and white slow-motion, a polished and updated *Bonnie and Clyde* scenario: shimmering oil derricks and sex, kicks, money and violence in a breezy road-movie landscape. The main body of the film follows a thriller format, heavy with *film noir* connotations, and configured around a love triangle at the apex of which is a femme fatale (Mädchen Amick) who is granted precious little autonomy and who tackles her role with some brittleness, as if to compensate. The climax hinges around the suspenseful exigencies of a bank heist, and details about the drug ring sub-plot have also to be accommodated. Basically the screenplay hedges its bets, and it shows.

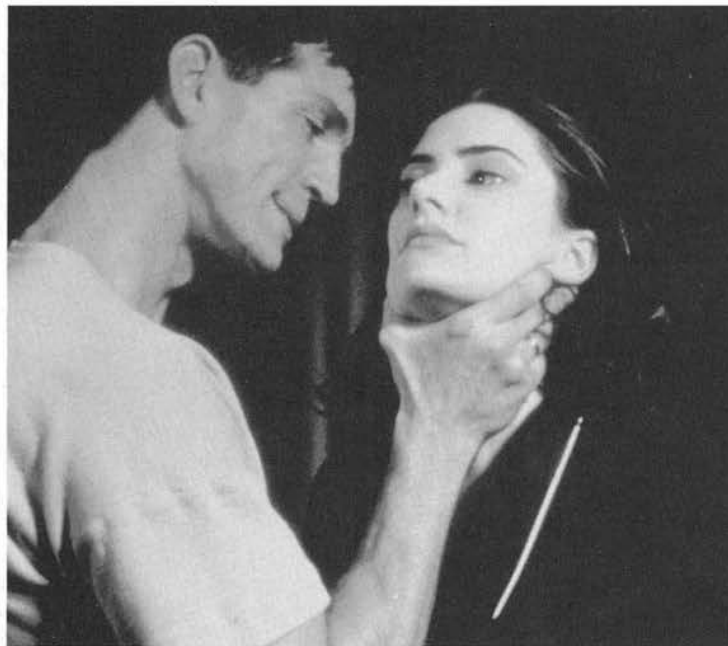
The stylised preamble to the film is given context by Reno's voice-over, an internalised monologue of threat to an unspecified woman, and by the first shot, an extreme close-up of his eye. This is a device which has been used to considerable effect as a signal for psychological disturbance in such films as *Peeping Tom* or *Taxi Driver*, but here it proves totally redundant. The action launches into a series of events, characterised by face-mashing violence and a

cracking editing pace, as if trying to roller coaster a way through the finale. The way Reno homes in on Lauren plays, almost caddishly, on the fear generated by the opening images of assault and by the threat of something vaguely twisted which never materialises. Once Reno is installed in the Harringtons' home and has reached a kind of pact with Lauren (or Velma, as he prefers to call her), the tension rapidly dissipates. For him, it becomes a question of reclaiming what is his - his wife, as it turns out, and a bit of extra cash. For us, there's a flimsy play on loyalties.

Reno's menace, intended as a portrayal of raw sexuality, trails off into buffoonery. Faced with the dialogue like "Spare me the vaseline rub, lover", Eric Roberts' deep-throated drawl lapses into self-parody, and his lurid tattoos don't help much either. Dangerous sex (Reno and Lauren) is knife-point, bodice-ripping stuff, while nice sex (Paul and Lauren) is represented by a foregrounded martini glass with a "Drink me" label, a forest of candles round the pool and an expensive black negligee. Reno's mate Billy, clutching an over-sized doll and peering through the windscreens at Reno making it with a girl on the car bonnet, gets to stand for no sex at all.

Much of the problem stems from the paucity of the screenplay, all the more apparent when yoked to the output of a fairly sophisticated art department. The visual style of *film noir* is recreated in the use of lighting and deep shadows; there's even a prevailing cynicism about motivation, and Tom, the personification of law and order, is dutifully opportunistic. But there's no deep sense of ingrained evil, only the hamming of it. The exercise is rather like an attempt to compress *Thelma and Louise* into a Bodyform commercial. We're left with a none too profound, over-convoluted guessing game about betrayal, where the ins and outs don't even tie up.

Jo Comino



Vaguely twisted: Eric Roberts, Mädchen Amick

## Miracle on 34th Street

USA 1994

Director: Les Mayfield

Certificate  
U  
Distributor  
20th Century Fox  
Production Company  
20th Century Fox  
Executive Producers  
William S. Beasley  
William S. Beasley  
Producer  
John Hughes  
Production Supervisor  
Christine A. Johnston  
Production Co-ordinators  
Patricia Willett  
New York:  
Rosemary Lombard  
Unit Production Managers  
William S. Beasley  
New York:  
Steve Rose  
Location Managers  
Bob Hudgins  
New York:  
Stan Mendoza  
2nd Unit Director  
Freddie Hice  
Assistant Directors  
Randy Suhr  
Michele Ziegler  
Scott H.C. Delsener  
Glen Trotiner  
Dean Garvin  
James Giovannetti Jr  
Aimee Kohn  
Casting  
Jane Jenkins  
Janet Hirschenson  
Associate:  
Susanna Griffith  
Screenplay  
George Seaton  
John Hughes  
Based on the 1947  
screenplay by  
George Seaton  
Script Supervisors  
Trudy Ramirez  
2nd Unit:  
Lori Yario  
Director of Photography  
Julio Macat  
2nd Unit Director  
of Photography  
Frank Byers  
Camera Operators  
George Kohut  
Tony Janelli  
Gabor Kover  
Gerrit Dangremond  
Visual Effects  
VIEF  
Supervisor:  
Gregory L. McMurray  
Graphics  
Eric Rosenberg  
Editor  
Raja Gosnell  
Production Designer  
Doug Kraner  
Art Directors  
Steve Arnold  
New York:  
Tom Warren  
Set Design  
John Berger  
Patricia A. Klawonn  
Nancy Mickelberry  
Carl Stensel  
Set Decorators  
Leslie Rollins  
New York:  
Les Bloom  
Set Dresser  
Troy Borisy  
Illustrators  
Mike Swift  
Production:  
Carl Aldana  
Tom Lay  
Sculptures  
Ian Whitecross  
Special Effects  
Co-ordinator  
John D. Milinac

Special Effects  
Rodman Kiser  
Steve Kirshoff  
Costume Design  
Kathy O'Rear  
Costume Supervisors  
Bruce Hogard  
Jennifer Jobst  
Make-up  
Ben Nye Jr  
Jamie Weiss  
Bernadette Mazur  
Hairstylist  
Bunny Parker-Adamson  
Title Design  
Nina Saxon  
Film Design  
Titles/Opticals  
Pacific Title  
Music  
Bruce Broughton  
Music Editor  
Patty Carlin  
Songs  
"Jingle Bells" by James  
Pierpont, performed  
by Natalie Cole; "It's  
Beginning to Look a  
Lot Like Christmas"  
by Meredith Wilson,  
performed by Dionne  
Warwick; "Santa Claus  
is Back in Town" by  
Jerry Leiber, Mike  
Stoller, performed by  
Elvis Presley; "Have  
Yourself a Merry Little  
Christmas" by Hugh  
Martin, Ralph Blane,  
performed by Kenny G;  
"Joy to the World" by  
Isaac Watts, George  
Friedrich Handel,  
performed by Aretha  
Franklin, Members of  
the FAME Freedom  
Choir; "Song for a  
Winter's Night" by  
Gordon Lightfoot,  
performed by Sarah  
McLachlan; "Santa  
Claus is Coming to  
Town" by Haven  
Gillespie, J. Fred  
Coots, performed  
by Ray Charles  
Sound Design  
Randy Thom  
Supervising Sound Editor  
Gloria S. Borders  
Dialogue Editors  
Ewa Sztompke  
Barbara McBane  
Claire Sanfilippo  
ADR Editors  
Suzanne Fox  
Hugh Waddell  
 Foley Editors  
Sandina Bailo-Lape  
Clare Freeman  
Sound Mixers  
Ronald Judkins  
Music:  
Armin Steiner  
Joel Moss  
 Foley Recordist  
Tony Eckert  
Sound Re-recordists  
Randt Thom  
Gary Summers  
Sound Effects Editors  
Tim Holland  
Ethan Van der Ryn  
 Foley Artists  
Dennie Thorpe  
Tom Barwick  
  
Cast  
Richard Attenborough  
Kriss Kringle  
Elizabeth Perkins  
Dorey Walker  
Dylan McDermott  
Bryan Bedford



**J.T. Walsh**  
Ed Collins  
**Joss Ackland**  
Victor Landbergh  
**James Remar**  
Jack Duff  
**Jane Leeves**  
Alberta Leonard  
**Simon Jones**  
Shellhammer  
**William Windom**  
C.F. Cole  
**Mara Wilson**  
Susan Walker  
**Robert Prosky**  
Judge Harper  
**Jack McGee**  
Tony Falacchi  
**Joe Pantangelo**  
Baillif  
**Mark Damiano II**  
Daniel  
**Casey Moses Wurzbach**  
Grandson  
**Jenny Morrison**  
Denice  
**Peter Siragusa**  
Cabbie  
**Samantha Krieger**  
Sami  
**Noratio Sanz**  
Orderly  
**Lisa Sparrman**  
Mrs Collins  
**Kimberly Smith**  
Court Clerk  
**Mike Bacarella**  
Santa  
**Harve Koltow**  
Businessman  
**Bianca Rose Pucci**  
Little Girl  
**Jimmy Joseph Meglio**  
Little Boy

**Hank Johnston**  
Boy  
**Margo Buchanan**  
Another Mother  
**Bill Buell**  
Band Director  
**Ron Beattie**  
Priest  
**Alexandra Michelle Stewart**  
Child  
**Paige Walker Leavell**  
Tricia  
**Rosanna Scott**  
**Michelle Marsh**  
**Joe Moskowitz**  
News Anchors  
**Lester Holt**  
**Susie Park**  
**Janet Kaus**  
Newscasters  
**Kathrine Narducci**  
Mother  
**Mary C. McCormack**  
Myrna Foy  
**Alvin Greenman**  
Doorman  
**Allison Janney**  
Woman  
**Greg Noonan**  
Cmndr. Coulson  
**Byrne Piven**  
Dr. Hunter  
**Peter Gerety**  
Cop

**10,248 feet**  
**114 minutes**

**Dolby stereo**  
**In colour**  
**DeLuxe**

Dorey Walker, supervisor of Special Projects at Cole's Department Store, panics when the Santa Claus hired for the Store's spectacular Christmas Parade topples drunkenly from his sleigh. Fortunately a replacement is at hand, Kriss Kringle, a specialist in the Santa Claus role, whose jovial participation renders the Parade a resounding success. This is unwelcome news to Victor Landbergh of Shopper's Express, main rival to Cole's, who assigns his henchman Jack Duff to monitor developments. That evening, Dorey shares a Thanksgiving dinner with her neighbour Bryan Bedford, an attorney, and her six-year-old daughter Susan, who decided long ago that Santa doesn't exist. Bryan loves them both, but Dorey is still smarting from the collapse of her first marriage and avoids involvement.

Next day, in his own Santa Claus outfit, Kriss takes up his duties at the Store, visited by throngs of delighted children. Their parents are furious that 'Santa' promises to deliver whatever he's asked for, until he points out that many of the gifts requested are available more cheaply at other stores. After a few qualms, this unusual altruism is welcomed as a promotional gimmick by the Store's Chairman, C.F. Cole. Reconsidering her opinion of Santa Claus, Susan consults her mother; Dorey suggests she asks for a near-impossible gift that only a truly magical Santa could deliver, and Susan accordingly tells Kriss she'd like a house, a father, and a brother for Christmas. Chances of delivery look slender when Dorey coldly turns down Bryan's offer of an engagement ring; sadly he passes the ring to Kriss to find a suitable owner.

Duff bribes the drunk 'Santa' to pre-

tend that Kriss has attacked him; Kriss is arrested, and there are much-publicised doubts as to his sanity. Suspicious at pressure from Landbergh's attorney to have Kriss locked away in an asylum, Judge Harper agrees to Bryan's demand for a public hearing. Kriss admits to believing he is Santa Claus, hoping that his dismissal as merely a crazy old man will protect the reputation of the 'real' Santa; the hearing becomes a debate as to whether Santa Claus exists or not. Taking his cue from Bryan, Susan, and a dollar bill, Judge Harper concludes that the collective faith of the American people justifies a belief in Santa Claus - and that he exists in the person of Kriss Kringle.

Amid nation-wide jubilation, Kriss rushes off for a busy night's work, while Dorey and Bryan receive separate invitations to meet at St. Mary's Church. They arrive to find a priest in readiness, with the ring. On Christmas morning, Susan sits in Dorey's apartment, certain that Santa has failed her, only to discover that Dorey and Bryan were married overnight, that a lavishly-decorated house awaits them, and that there is every prospect of a baby brother arriving in due course.

Partly because of a musical phrase on the soundtrack which echoes a number from *My Fair Lady*, the impression initially conveyed by *Miracle on 34th Street* is that everyone is about to burst into song. At various times since it first appeared in 1947, George Seaton's story has done just that (as a Broadway musical in 1963, and a decade later on CBS), as well as undergoing revivals on American radio and television. Inscrutably disguised as *The Big Heart*, it staked a lesser claim to the affections of British audiences but remains cherished by fans of Maureen O'Hara and Natalie Wood (an irresistible 9-year-old at the time). Now refurbished for the *Jurassic Park* generation, the weight of the story has been shifted to the shoulders of Richard Attenborough whose zest for perilous magic seems unclouded by the recollection of a few undisciplined dinosaurs. His celebrity status and impermeable jolliness, while never quite other-worldly enough, render him the ideal Santa Claus, a creature of popular, and mercenary, fiction with any number of good deeds to his name.

It's a pity, though, that the songs never get sung. Offered in the exuberant form of a musical, where conven-



Impermeably jolly: Richard Attenborough

tional logic can be diverted by a simple change of key and an overwhelming chorus, the 'proving' of Santa would be much less of a challenge to the attentive audience. In a non-musical, however, the moment of collision between fable and reality (always the weakest point in Seaton's screenplay) offers scant confirmation of anything. Originally, the argument ran that, as the government-owned Post Office delivered all 'Santa Claus' letters to Kriss Kringle, the government - and therefore the law - recognised him as Santa. This time around, with amendments by John Hughes, the fact that 'In God We Trust' appears on American currency is regarded as substantiating the nation's faith in the unprovable. This enables Judge Harper, displaying a clear case of bias, to assert that Santa exists in the person of Kringle - a resounding non-sequitur. The implications for any thinking British child must be firstly that Santa is American, secondly that the Bank of England would appear to be more reliable than God, and thirdly that you can legally believe in anything you like so long as nobody can prove you're wrong.

While plenty of free-thinking is to be encouraged, the irony of young Susan's education is that she regresses from a healthy cynicism into the compulsory conclusion that Kringle is what he claims to be - and that this acceptance is forced upon her by a display of rampant materialism (a sumptuous dream-house straight out of a department-store catalogue) and a shotgun wedding. Kringle's ability to talk in Swahili and sign-language, along with his politely ingratiating demeanour, does convey a small hint of Christmas spirit (although most religious aspects of the festive season are resolutely ignored), but since his chief function is to stimulate sales, there remains the awkward question of why he has to descend all the world's chimneys in a single night to deliver parcels that have already been purchased.

This is all something of a hoax and would be none the worse for it except that it has been filmed with a peculiar lifelessness. One might guess that director Mayfield has an interest in culture-shock themes: he was a producer on *Hearts of Darkness* (about Coppola's *Apocalypse Now*) and recently made *California Man* (a comedy about the revival of a prehistoric 'missing link'), but has yet to find an effective voice. While never less than smoothly professional, *Miracle* has a visual dullness too seldom relieved by such touches as the flash of gold from the rims of Kringle's glasses, or the array of toy soldiers on the desk of his main antagonist (an uncredited but enjoyably villainous appearance by Joss Ackland). Frozen into a mask of makeup, Elizabeth Perkins has little chance of conveying anything but disapproval, while Mara Wilson, excellently meditative as her long-suffering daughter, looks understandably eager to take on tougher assignments. They both deserve brighter and more sparkling miracles.

Philip Strick

## The Neverending Story III

Germany 1994

Director: Peter Macdonald

**Certificate**  
U  
**Distributor**  
Warner Bros  
**Production Companies**  
CineVox  
Filmproduktion/  
Studio Babelsberg  
**Producers**  
Dieter Geissler  
Tim Hampton  
**Line Producers**  
Harry Nap  
Harold Tichenor  
**Production Co-ordinators**  
Christiane Stein  
Elaine Fleming  
**Unit Managers**  
Rolf Hanke  
Raoul Leindecker  
**Production:**  
Günther Russ  
Lynne Bespflug  
**Location Manager**  
John Penhall  
**Post-production Co-ordinator**  
Karin Bernard  
**Assistant Directors**  
Nikolas Korda  
Stefan Diepenbrock  
Kathy Gilroy-Sereda  
Tim Sereda  
Albrecht von Bethmann  
Peter Spuhler  
Sheila Carpenter  
Benjamin Lohmer  
**Casting**  
Agentur Drews Berlin  
**Voice:**  
Lyssinc  
**Screenplay**  
Jeff Lieberman  
**Story**  
Karin Howard  
Based on characters from the novel  
*The Neverending Story*  
by Michael Ende  
**Script Supervisor**  
Jean Berezink  
**Director of Photography**  
Robin Vidgeon  
**Aerial Unit Director of Photography**  
Tony Westman  
**Camera Operators**  
David Worley  
Julian Chojnacki  
Sandy McCallum  
2nd Unit:  
Freddie Cooper  
South Dakota:  
Alan White  
**Steadicam Operator**  
Klemens Becker  
**Digital Visual Effects**  
Toccata New Image production  
**Producer:**  
Werner Bibo  
**Production Manager:**  
Ralph Bibo  
**Co-ordinator:**  
Bertram Friedrich  
**Digital Compositing/2D Animation**  
Ruby Alvarez  
Andrea Duyster  
Arnold Rock  
Rüdiger Thumann  
Caroline Wise  
**3D Animation/Compositing**  
Philipp Hartman  
Stephan Osterburg  
**Animation**  
Dominique Schuchman  
**Blue Screen Supervisor**  
Detlef Boos  
**Visual Effects Art Director**  
Brian Smithies  
**Visual/Optical Effects**  
Cinemagic

**Optical Co-ordinator**  
Peter Fast  
**Animatronic Creatures**  
Jim Henson's Creature Shop  
Creative Supervisor:  
John Stephenson  
**Production Head:**  
William Plant  
**Project Supervisor:**  
Verner Greysty  
**Puppet Co-ordinator:**  
Rob Tygner  
**Production Co-ordinator:**  
Adam Fausset  
**Designers:**  
Gary Pollard  
Kevin O'Boyle  
Nigel Booth  
Merrick Durling  
**Sculptors:**  
Alex Harwood  
Carole De Jong  
Christie Overs  
Chris Fitzgerald  
Lindsey McGowan  
Justin Exley  
Colin Shulver  
Tracy Kneale  
Christiane Koch  
Jane Francis  
Ivan Manzella  
Joel Collins  
Rashna Elevia  
Miniatures Model Supervisor:  
Richard Perks  
**Key Puppeteers**  
David Alan Barclay  
Richard Coombs  
Susan Dacre  
Philip Eason  
Rick Lyon  
**Editor**  
Michael Bradsell  
**Production Designer**  
Rolf Zehetbauer  
**Set Decorators**  
Bernhard Henrich  
Robert Davidson  
**Set Dressers**  
Ziad Ragheb  
Sylvia Berg  
Mark Howes  
Ed Jensen  
Michael Molson  
**Conceptual Artist**  
Michael White  
**Draughtsman**  
James Steuart  
**Storyboard Artists**  
Michael White  
Syd Cain  
Chris Buffett  
Roger Deer  
**Special Effects Co-ordinator**  
Gary Paller  
**Special Effects Senior Technician:**  
Paul Knowles  
**Floor Effects Supervisor:**  
Ulli Nefer  
**Fabricators:**  
Harry Tomsic  
Robert Tomsic  
**Wardrobe Supervisors**  
Crystine Booth  
**Costume Supervisors**  
Fiona Cazaly  
D.J. Gramman  
**Costume Technical Co-ordinators**  
Tony Loeser  
Kurt Schulze  
**Make-up**  
Norma Hill-Patton  
**Special Make-up Effects**  
Hasso von Hugo  
**Hairstylist**  
Kandace Loewen  
**Music**  
Peter Wolf



## Songs

"Life is a Lemon And..." by Jim Steinman, performed by Meatloaf; "Back & Forth" by R. Kelly, performed by Aaliyah; "Games People Play" by Joe South, performed by Inner Circle; "How How" by Dieter Meier, Boris Blank, performed by Yello; "Crash! Boom! Bang!" by Per Gessle, performed by Roxette; "Mission of Love", "Dream On..." by Jacqueline Nemorin, Toby Gad, performed by Nemorin; "Kiss From a Rose" by Seal, Henri Samual, performed by Seal; "Girly Girl" by Luci van Org, Ralf Goldkind, performed by Luciletric; "I'm a Stoneman" by Thorsten B rger, Claudia A. Wohlfromm, "Born to be Wild" by Mars Bonfire, performed by Stoneman; "Shortcut to Forever" by Peter Wolf, Ina Wolf, performed by Phillip Ingram, Siedah Garrett; "Dream State" by Linus Burdick, performed by Coda; "Nasty World" by Thorsten B rger, Claudia A. Wohlfromm, Windsor Robinson, performed by Double Impact; "United" by Peterson, Walberg, Paquette, Christensen, performed by Prince Ital Joe, Marky Mark

**Choreography**  
Mark Davis  
Brad Rapier

**Dialogue Editor**  
Bill Trent

**Foley Editor**  
Helga Wagner

**Sound Mixers**  
Axel Arft  
Location:  
Ralph Parker  
2nd Unit Sound Recorder  
Thomas Sch tt

**Sound Re-recording Mixers**  
Ray Merrin  
Graham Daniel

**Foley Artist**  
Mel Kutbey

**Stunt Co-ordinators**  
Mark Boyle  
Bill Ferguson

**Cast**  
Jason James Richter  
Bastian  
Melody Kay  
Nicole  
Jack Black  
Slip  
Carole Finn  
Mookie  
Ryan Bollman  
Dog

**Freddie Jones**  
Mr Coreander/  
Old Man of Wandering  
Mountain  
**Julie Cox**  
Empress  
**Moya Brady**  
Urgl  
**Tony Robinson**  
Engywook  
**Thomas Petruo**  
Large Head  
**Tracey Ellis**  
Jane Bux  
**Kevin McNulty**  
Barney  
**Nicole Parker**  
P. Adrien Dorval  
Nasties  
**Kaefan Shaw**  
Bark Troll  
**Gorden Robertson**  
Falkor  
**Fred Warder**  
Mr Rockchewer  
**William Todd Jones**  
Mrs Rockchewer  
**David Forman**  
Junior Rockchewer  
**Danu Anthony**  
Samantha  
**Andrea Nemeth**  
Rachel  
**Mark Acheson**  
Janitor  
**Marilyn Norry**  
Mrs Crackerby  
**Shirley Broderick**  
Mrs Coreander  
**Ruth Nichol**  
Samantha's Mother  
**Alfonso R. Quijada**  
Delivery Man  
**Ulrich Kinalzik**  
Eskimo Trapper  
**Frederick Warder**  
Shipping Clerk  
**John Bear Curtis**  
Lumberjack  
**Richard Newman**  
Photographer  
**Yeena Sood**  
Marcy Goldberg  
**Lossen Chambers**  
Sales Women  
**Horthgar Matthews**  
Nursery Truck Driver  
**Samantha McKenna**  
Schoolgirl  
**David Longworth**  
Log Dispatcher  
**Jessica Walden**  
Bird Girl  
**Lauren Samis**  
Creepy Girl  
**Jenna Irvine**  
Trickster  
**William Hootkins**  
Bark Troll/Falkor Voices  
**Gary Martin**  
Mr Rockchewer/Junior  
Rockchewer Voices  
**Mac McDonald**  
Mrs Rockchewer's Voice

8,550 feet  
95 minutes

Dolby stereo  
In colour

English version  
German title:  
Die unendliche  
Geschichte III



**Nuclear family: the Rockchewers**

Empress in the Ivory Tower and learn that they must fight the Nasties back in the real world. To help Bastian, she gives him the Aurn, a magic necklace which grants wishes. While trying to get to the real world, the creatures from Fantasia are scattered over the continent and must find Bastian in order to get back to Fantasia.

Meanwhile, the Nasties find the Neverending Story book, and realize that they can control events in Fantasia as well as in their own world by possessing the book. They persecute Bastian with tricks, while he is preoccupied with finding his friends. The Nasties realize that if they acquire the Aurn as well, they will be all-powerful. Unfortunately, Nicole finds it, and discovers that it will grant her anything she wants. Consequently, she goes on a shopping spree at the local mall, where the Nasties stalk her, eventually getting hold of the Aurn. In Fantasia, the Nastiness spreads, causing everyone to become selfish and cruel; meanwhile, at the mall, everyone becomes avaricious and bad-tempered, even Bastian's parents. Finally, having found all his friends from Fantasia, Bastian confronts Slip, the leader of the Nasties, and challenges him to a combat. While they fight, Nicole grabs the book and reads out Bastian's victory, which happens as she narrates it. Bastian and Nicole rush home in time to reconcile their parents. Fantasia and the real world are restored to order, and even the Nasties forswear their evil ways.

Like many sequels, *The Neverending Story III* is a diminished return, in more senses than one. The story may never end, but the budget is Ever Decreasing. By setting the action primarily in the real world, the film-makers saved a fortune on sets, extras and costumes, and so inevitably this third instalment in the saga looks tired and cheap, especially in comparison with the first two films, which were so rich in spectacle.

The lack of whizzes and bangs on the visual front would not be so noticeable if the script were less weak. The first two films were more glossy and bedazzling, but more importantly, they knew how to evoke pathos and a sense

of magic out of hybrid material. Like ersatz Grimm fairytales rewritten by Bruno Bettelheim, they combined mythical creatures and landscapes with reasonably moving psychodramas. First, Bastian had to combat Nothingness by speaking the name of his dead mother in order to save Fantasia; then Emptiness could only be eradicated by being filled with love. In this latest effort, the stakes are considerably lower. The hero's battles are less with his own inner psyche, more with external forces. Nastiness is intrinsically a less resonant foe than Nothingness and Emptiness, and manifests itself largely in the bullies' bad dress sense and corny slapstick cruelty. Consequently, this is a much less po-faced worthy film, but what it has lost in 'depth' it inadequately makes up for with jokey self-referentiality.

Intrinsic to the first two films is the use of what might be termed the "Tinkerbell effect". The child spectator is continually invited to believe that belief itself could save the fictional world. The didactic plea for literacy is cleverly sewn into the narrative structure itself, so that Bastian's reading the book actually constructs the fantasy world. *The Neverending Story III* is far less interested in its progenitors' metaphysics for the under-tens, and uses the plot device of the magic book less imaginatively. Originally, the two worlds stayed visually and spatially distinct, providing a satisfying tension. Here, they continually bleed into each other, so that not only do Fantasians enter the prosaic real world, but also their hitherto pure Teutonic fantasyland seems to have been perniciously infected with modernism, producing rock monsters who sing 'Born to be Wild' and Aryan princesses who say "cool". Is nothing sacred?

It seems a staggering tactical mistake in the first place to set the film so much in the real world, depriving the audience of the fantasy realm that was, for all its kitschy excess, the major attraction of the cycle. The strategy is tantamount to setting a Wizard of Oz story mainly in Kansas - which no child, in their heart of hearts, really wants to go back to, at least not yet.

**Leslie Felperin**

## Nostradamus

United Kingdom/Germany 1993

Director: Roger Christian

**Certificate**  
15  
**Distributor**  
First Independent  
**Production Companies**  
Allied Entertainment  
(UK)/Vereinigte Film  
Partners (Germany)  
**Executive Producers**  
Peter McRae  
David Mintz  
Kent Walwin  
**Producers**  
Edward Simons  
Harald Reichb ner  
**Executive Production**  
**Consultants**  
Colin Syn  
Masao Takiyama  
**Line Producer /**  
**Associate Producer**  
Gerry Levy  
**Production Co-ordinator**  
Kerstin Ott  
**Production Managers**  
Michael Stricker  
Romania:  
Doina Dragnea  
**Location Manager**  
Marian Moldovan  
**Assistant Directors**  
Bill Berry  
Patrick Kinney  
Doina Caradan  
Theodor Halacu Nicon  
Grigorita Rogobete  
Sanda Iorgulescu  
**Casting**  
Joyce Gallie  
Sally Osoba  
**Screenplay**  
Knut Boeser  
Based on a story by  
Piers Ashworth, Roger  
Christian  
**Additional Dialogue**  
Brian Clark  
**Script Supervisors**  
Daphne Carr  
Angela Allen  
**Director of Photography**  
Denis Crossan  
**Camera Operator**  
Angus Bickerton  
**Matte Artist**  
Steven Begg  
**Editor**  
Alan Strachan  
**Production Designer**  
Peter J. Hampton  
**Art Director**  
Christian Nicol  
**Set Design**  
Mihai Ionescu  
**Set Decorator**  
Michael D. Ford  
**Scenic Artist**  
James Hunt  
**Sculptures**  
Duncan Brown  
Neill Gorton  
**Miniatures**  
Neil Davies  
Steve Paton  
**Models**  
Jeremy King  
**Special Effects Supervisor**  
Jim Francis  
**Costume Design**  
Ulla Gothe  
**Make-up Artists**  
Christine Atar  
Christiane Weber  
Samir Atar  
Romania:  
Gigi Draghic  
Ioana-Yeny Lita  
**Special Make-up Effects**  
Jens Bartram  
**Titles/Opticals**  
General Screen  
Enterprises  
**Music**  
Barrington Pheloung  
**Music Performed by**  
Metropolitan  
Orchestra, London  
New London Consort

English Chamber Choir  
Choir of Selwyn  
College, Cambridge  
**Music Conductor**  
Barrington Pheloung  
**Supervising Sound Editor**  
Alan Paley  
**Dialogue Editor**  
Bill Trent  
**ADR Editor**  
Paul Horrocks  
**Foley Editor**  
Peter Holt  
**Sound Recordists**  
James Corcoran  
Music:  
Dave Hunt  
**Sound Re-recordists**  
Ray Merrin  
Graham Daniel  
Armourer  
Karl Schmidt

**Cast**  
Tcheky Karyo  
Nostradamus  
F. Murray Abraham  
Scalinger  
Rutger Hauer  
The Mystic Monk  
Amanda Plummer  
Catherine de Medici  
Julia Ormond  
Marie  
Assumpta Serna  
Anne  
Anthony Higgins  
King Henry II  
Diana Quick  
Diane de Portier  
Michael Gough  
Jean de Remy  
Maja Morgenstern  
Helen  
Magdalena Ritter  
Sophie  
Bruce Myers  
Professor  
Leon Lissek  
Michael Byrne  
Istefan Patoli  
Inquisitors  
Bruce Alexander  
Paul  
Oana Pelea  
Landlady  
Matthew Morley  
Michel, age 11  
Thomas Christian  
Cezar, age 10  
David Gwillim  
Michael's Father  
Amanda Walker  
Madame Scalinger  
Richenda Carey  
Countess  
Razvan Popa  
Scalinger's Servant  
Amanda Boxer  
Patient  
Serban Celea  
Raoul  
Adrian Pentea  
Doctor  
Eugenia Maci  
Madame Auberlign e  
Mihai Niculescu  
Mayor  
Florin Calinescu  
Dan Sanulescu  
Adrian Titieni  
Priests  
Eugen Cristea  
Scribe  
Sergiu Anghel  
Tomi Cristin  
Students  
Sergiu Anghel  
Doina Anghel  
Dancers  
Maria Varsami  
Midwife  
Florin Busuioac  
Commander  
Rupert Holiday Evans  
Pilgrim in Church  
Michael Verbitky  
Pilgrim in Boat

Bastian, the human protagonist of the two earlier *Neverending Story* films, now has a new stepmother and a stepsister, Nicole, who is rude and distant. Trying to escape a gang of bullies, the Nasties, at his new school, Bastian hides in the library where he meets Mr. Coreander, the new librarian, who first introduced Bastian to the *Neverending Story*. Transported into the *Story*, Bastian learns from Engywook and Urgl, two gnomes, that a terrible Nastiness is tearing Fantasia apart. Meeting up with other old friends - a talking tree, a baby rock monster, and Falkor, the Luck Dragon - they seek out the



**Rudy Rosenfeld**  
Assistant Director  
**Vasile Popa**  
Montgomery  
**Vasile Albinet**  
Henry's Double  
**Mihai Cibu**  
Chamberlain  
**Ioan Brancu**  
Footman  
**Gheorghe Visu**  
Ruggerio  
**Manuela Colescu**  
Chambermaid  
**Anca Danilescu**  
Margaret

**Viviana Chita**  
Claude  
**Sando Mihai Grui**  
Stretcher Bearer  
**Andrei Penic**  
Torturer  
  
**10,802 feet**  
**120 minutes**  
  
**Dolby stereo**  
**In colour**  
**DeLuxe**

Sixteenth-century France. Michel de Nostre Dame, whose family have converted from Judaism to Christianity, causes controversy at medical school by advocating herbal cures rather than bleeding, and is marked as an enemy of the Holy Inquisition. Joining the household of Scallinger, one of a cabal of heretical scientists, Michel learns the secrets of the scientist's secret library and marries Marie, Scallinger's apprentice, with whom he has two children. Fascinated by astrology as well as medicine, Michel is afflicted with visions of violent destructions that he believes will fall upon the world in the future. When Marie and the children die of the plague, the Inquisition discover one of Scallinger's forbidden books in her possession. Michel has to flee, along with the books.

Remarrying to Anne, a Spanish widow, Michel burns the books to avoid persecution but compiles and publishes his prophecies. His prediction that King Henry II will die in a jousting accident attracts the interest of the Queen, Catherine de Medici, who is humiliated by her husband's public amour with Diane de Portier. Henry and Diane try to poison Michel, but the Queen helps him survive. Michel tells Catherine that all her sons will sit on the throne of France but that she will outlive them all. Hélène, Michel's sister-in-law, denounces him to the Inquisition because he has rejected her sexual advances, but the Queen intervenes and saves him from torture. Henry dies as Michel predicted, precipitating the French religious wars. Michel reveals the extent of the catastrophes (including three world wars, Hitler, the atomic bomb and Aids) he envisions for the twentieth century, but also predicts mankind will survive to make a future in space.

After art direction and second unit work (notably on the *Star Wars* films), high profile shorts (*The Dollar Bottom*, *Black Angel*), and a striking if little-seen debut with *The Sender*, director Roger Christian hit a career stumbling block with his dreadful second feature *Lorca* and the *Outlaws* (omitted from his current c.v.) and has not been heard of for ten years. *Nostradamus*, a fascinating mess which alternates between provocative and ridiculous, marks a welcome return. However, its startling moments (such as an under-the-credits vision of a dark city devastated by a nightmare quake) are balanced by the kind of weird historical thigh-slapping indicated by the credit

"and Rutger Hauer as 'The Mystic Monk'", which provoked such hilarity at the press show. Christian manages fairly well to integrate jarring time-slips like Michel's straying from sixteenth-century France into a World War II battle, recalling the shocking psychic bursts of *The Sender*. But he stumbles somewhat on biographical moments, such as the amazingly swift mood-shift from Marie's attempted suicide into love-making with her rescuer, Michel.

In shuffling through biography and history, *Nostradamus* - though held together by a charismatic lead performance from Tchéky Karyo - sometimes seems as if it has been cut down from a much greater length. A spirited cast makes the most of roles which end up as little more than cameos. Audiences with memories of A-level history might understand the chilling sequence when the Queen introduces Michel to her angelic coterie of children ("This is my wife," one pre-teen says of a little girl, "Queen Mary of Scotland"); he instantly is overcome by a vision of blood pouring *Shining*-style through the walls and doors over the doomed junior monarchs. When it gets into court intrigues, Amanda Plummer (who obviously accepted the role of Catherine de Medici purely for the frocks) shows off her line in sly aristocratic patronage, breezing into a Pythonesque Inquisition chamber and asking Michel's torturer whether he would care to bet his life on the superiority of the Holy Court to the temporal powers invested in the Queen.

The film slips when it turns from biography into Awful Warning, perhaps because it accepts wholeheartedly that Nostradamus was not at all a charlatan. As Michel stares into a bowl of water and sees familiar news footage of Hitler, nuclear tests, JFK, famine and Saddam Hussein, it's hard not to wonder why his visions go from sepia to colour towards the end of the twentieth century. One might also question why, until a last vision of a serene spacehip, Nostradamus never seems to foresee anything trivial or good, like Elvis on *The Ed Sullivan Show* or the life of Gandhi. Though Nostradamus declares he has revealed his knowledge to the world because it is possible to go against the visions and avoid disasters, his own slightly-advanced-for-its-day medicine is simply good sense. If he could predict events like wars and assassinations in the twentieth century, surely his duty as a physician was to concentrate on predicting discoveries, like penicillin and anaesthesia, which would have been of immediate use to his patients in the sixteenth.

Nevertheless, probably because of its silliness as much as despite them, *Nostradamus* offers a variety of pleasures and instantly eclipses the 1957 *The Man Without a Body* - in which financier George Coulouris has scientists revive Nostradamus' severed head so the prophet can give him stock market tips - as the definitive Nostradamus exploitation movie.

**Kim Newman**

## Only the Strong

USA 1993

Director: Sheldon Lettich

**Certificate**  
15  
**Distributor**  
Rank  
**Production Company**  
PolyGram Filmed  
Entertainment presents  
A Freestone  
Pictures/Davis Films  
production  
**Executive Producer**  
Victor Hadida  
**Producers**  
Samuel Hadida  
Stuart S. Shapiro  
Steven G. Menkin  
**Associate Producer**  
Robert D. Simon  
**Supervising Producer**  
Conrad L. Ricketts  
**Production Supervisor**  
Elayne Keratis  
**Location Manager**  
Charles Ruiz de Castilla  
**Location Co-ordinator**  
Richard Borrego  
**Location Consultant**  
Mary Morgan  
**Post-production Supervisor**  
Michael J. Harker  
**2nd Unit Director**  
Charles Ruiz de Castilla  
**Assistant Directors**  
Robert D. Simon  
James Paul Hapsas  
**Casting**  
James F. Tarzia  
**Screenplay**  
Sheldon Lettich  
Luis Esteban  
**Script Supervisor**  
Susana Preston  
**Director of Photography**  
Edward Pei  
**Camera Operator**  
Michael McGowan  
**Editor**  
Stephen Semel  
**Production Designer**  
J. Mark Harrington  
**Art Director**  
Annabel Delgado  
**Set Decorator**  
Barbara Peterson  
**Set Dressers**  
Skip Schields  
Michael Calabrese  
**Scenic Artist**  
Jose Duarte  
**Storyboard Artist**  
Rodney S. Ascher  
**Graffiti Artist**  
Hilton Luciano III  
**Costume Design**  
Patricia Field  
**Wardrobe Supervisor**  
Kristy Moore Aitken  
**Make-up Artist**  
Isabel Harkins  
**Hairstylist**  
Gary D. Walker  
**Music**  
Harvey W. Mason  
Additional:  
Nigel Holton  
**Music Editor**  
Robin Katz  
**Songs/Music Extracts**  
"Only the Strong" by  
Kao Rossman, Stuart  
Shapiro, Iki Levy, Scott  
G., Marcel "ICB"  
Branch, Patrick  
"Dizon" McCain,  
Donna Simon,  
performed by Marcel  
"ICB" Branch, Patrick  
"Dizon" McCain, Donna  
Simon; "Enter the  
Dojo" by Iki Levy;  
"Comin' Together"  
by Iki Levy, Scott G.;  
"Swang Da Funk"  
by Blueblood, Lroc,  
M. Johnson, King Black,  
C. Wave, E. Roc Drah,  
M. Crocker, performed  
by New Version of Soul;

"Babalu Bad Boy" by  
U. Reyes, L. Mugerud,  
performed by Mellow  
Man Ace; "Miami Boyz"  
by B. Graham, A. Cuff,  
performed by Miami  
Boyz; "Capoeira Song"  
by Claudio Carniero,  
performed by "Amen"  
Santo; "Donovan's Mix"  
by Kao Rossman, Tony  
Vargas, vocal samples  
by Corey Franklin;  
"Paranue" by Kao  
Rossman, Stuart  
Shapiro, "Zoom-  
Zoom Zoom" by  
Kao Rossman, "Olele,  
O'Lala" by Tony Vargas,  
performed by Serapis  
Bey; "Ogum Drum  
Music" performed by  
Ilesa Anago Africa  
**Supervising Sound Editors**  
Robert R. Rutledge  
Steve Bushelman  
**Dialogue Editors**  
Thomas Jones  
Tom Scurry  
Scott Lynch  
**Supervising ADR Editor**  
Richard Marx  
**ADR Editor**  
Norto Sepulveda  
**Sound Recordist**  
Jimmy Busceme  
**Sound Mixer**  
Henri Lopez  
**Sound Re-recording Mixers**  
Paul Ratajczak  
Ed Carr  
Dennis Patterson  
**Sound Effects Editors**  
Lisle Engle  
Matt Green  
Duce Vines  
**Loop Group**  
Sounds Great  
**Stunt Co-ordinators**  
Artie Malesci  
Frank Dux  
**Fight Co-ordinator**  
Frank Dux

**Cast**  
**Mark Bacascos**  
Louis Stevens  
**Stacey Travis**  
Dianna  
**Geoffrey Lewis**  
Kerrigan  
**Paco Christian Prieto**  
Silverio  
**Todd Susman**  
Cochran  
**Jeffrey Anderson Gunter**  
Philippe  
**Richard Coca**  
Orlando  
**Roman Cardwell**  
Shay  
**Ryan Bollman**  
Donovan  
**Christian Klemash**  
Eddie  
**John Fionte**  
Cervantes  
**Joselito "Amen" Santo**  
Javier  
**John Gregory Kasper**  
Coach Kasper  
**Phyllis Sukoff**  
Mrs Esposito  
**Antoni Corone**  
Green Beret Sergeant  
**Mellow Man Ace**  
Student Rapper  
**Felipe Savahge**  
Luis Esteban  
Brazilians  
**Jim Vickers**  
Police Sergeant  
**Mark Salem**  
Cop  
**Joann Dukes**  
Newscaster  
**David Luther**  
School Security Guard

**Adeniri S. Ajamu**  
Chief Aiama  
**Alan Jordan**  
Chop Shop Foreman  
**Frank Dux**  
Welder  
**Tony De Leoni**  
Diego Perez  
Mechanics  
**Diane Fraind**  
Henry Friand  
Teachers  
**Salvador Levy**  
Cuban Coffee Drinker  
**Junior Biggs**  
Jamaican Dealer  
**Iseline Celestin**  
Haitian Woman  
**Donna Kimball**  
Donovan's Mother  
**Steven G. Menkin**  
Doctor  
**Stuart S. Shapiro**  
John  
**Saudia Young**  
Hooker  
**Sergio Pereira**  
Michael F. Lagapa  
Silverio's Bodyguards  
**Ricky Amador**  
Robert D. Cortes  
**Kevin J. Fernandez**

**Fernando Hoyos**  
Jorge A. Smith  
**Steven Tarrago**  
Tony Delano  
**Gino Salvano**  
Brazilian Gang  
**Marq Withers**  
Philippe's Bodyguard  
**Dwight D. Woods**  
Ernest Simmons  
**Jamaican Gang**  
Danny Downey  
**Ricky Do**  
Rigo Hernandez  
**Peter Kerwin**  
Jean Rony Nortelus  
**Elvis St Hilaire**  
Ricky Simon  
**Michael Kimling**  
Capoeira Students  
**Cesar Carnerio**  
Claudio Carnerio  
**Paulo Silva**  
Djalma Pereira  
**Claudia Gutierrez**  
Brazilian Capoeira  
Performers

**8,725 feet**  
**97 minutes**  
  
**Dolby stereo**  
**In colour**  
**Eastmancolor**

Louis Stevens is a Miami Lincoln High School graduate who joined the Green Berets to fight against drug lords in Brazil. Disillusioned by failure but now a master of capoeira, he returns to his old school to see his teacher Mr Kerrigan. There he is shocked by the lack of discipline and the extent to which the pupils have become the victims of a culture of drugs and violence. He challenges a Jamaican drug dealer who is intimidating a pupil. The dealer attacks him, but Louis leaves him beaten.

Louis suggests to Kerrigan that he gives him twelve of the school's most troublesome pupils to train in capoeira. The staff agree, and Kerrigan finds a deserted fire station for Louis to use as a dojo (a special place for training). Despite initial lack of enthusiasm, the twelve are gradually won over. Among them, Donovan volunteers to make a fresh mix of the traditional capoeira tape Louis uses for the class, and Eddie agrees to be Louis's first pupil. Orlando, who spends his free time stealing and rebuilding cars for his gang-leader cousin Silverio, quits. Louis tracks him to a basketball court. His attempt to woo him back is interrupted by Silverio and his sidekicks.

Orlando returns and Louis takes the boys to the coast where they practice capoeira in natural surroundings. Returning to school, they are met by Silverio, who demands that Orlando leave the school to work permanently for him. The police arrive and Orlando reluctantly goes quietly with him. Silverio and his gang then attack the school. Kerrigan is threatened and Donovan is killed. Following sensational television coverage, Louis is barred from the campus. He seeks out Silverio at his 'car shop' where the henchmen attack him. In the mayhem Louis' class arrives. Silverio agrees to a one-on-one contest. A circle forms



around them. Louis succumbs to a brutal attack. Then the class begins to sing a *capoeira* song. Magically Louis revives and begins spectacularly to fight back. With Silverio laid out unconscious on the ground, the police arrive. Later, at the graduation ceremony, the *capoeira* class put on a demonstration.

The twist Sheldon Lettich gives this generic martial arts piece is to root Louis' fighting style in *capoeira*, the traditional dance/martial art of Brazil. Given *capoeira's* radical and liberationist roots, this is no bad thing. *Capoeira* was memorably used alongside allusions to Brazil's mythic heroes by the Brazilian cinema *novos* of the 60s, especially by its prime exponent Glauber Rocha. Sadly, little of these distinctive folk roots survives the transfer to Miami – although the film seems to argue that it should. The music, for instance, though it is pleasant enough, is remixed by one of the pupils to be more easily assimilated by Louis's "dirty dozen", but only in its most 'primitive' form is it able to awake within Louis the primeval power to fight back against Silverio.

Sheldon Lettich has put in time with Sylvester Stallone (he wrote the script for *Rambo III*), yet he is careful here to eschew high-tech violence. Instead he returns the genre to its roots in 70s Hong Kong martial arts cinema, specifically the work of Bruce Lee. It is to the film's benefit that the action frequently takes place in ordinary streets, where daily life proceeds in its usual fashion. After all, for all its drama, the struggle is not between titans but between the kids and the gangs on the block.

Otherwise Lettich touches the usual generic buttons. Martial arts are revealed as a force of nature and depicted through a mixture of 'heroic' rituals – all those blazing torches, bonfires and circles of observers within which two chosen combatants struggle for supremacy. It's effective enough, but the character of Louis is problematic. Despite his back-story struggles against drug cartels, he remains a curiously detached figure, a mix of Mary Poppins and Action Man who is never driven – by his own sense of personal degradation, as in the Hong Kong films, nor by the need to avenge Donovan's death. The scenes of painful, masochistic physical rehabilitation after brutal physical punishment which usually stand for motivation in this genre are missing.

Yet there are slim shards of an "aesthetics of hunger... of violence (but not primitivism)" which the *cinema novo* manifesto espoused. It's there in the characters of Orlando, unpreposingly adenoidal as he is, and his authentically inarticulate cousin Silverado. Apart from generalities about personal freedom and the world outside the "hood" (which we never see), in the end Louis is incapable of answering Orlando's key question. Drugs, theft and killing pay, Orlando says. What's Louis got to offer?

Verina Glaessner

## Princess Caraboo

USA 1994

Director: Michael Austin

### Certificate

PG

### Distributor

Entertainment

### Production Companies

Beacon

Communications

Tri-Star

J&M Entertainment

present a

Longfellow Pictures

Artisan Films

Production

### Executive Producers

Arman Bernstein

Tom Rosenberg

Marc Abraham

### Producers

Andy Karsch

Simon Bosanquet

### Executive in Charge of Production

Thomas Bliss

### Production Supervisor

Mary Richards

### Production Co-ordinator

Clare St John

### Location Managers

Paul Shersby

Christian McWilliams

Wales:

Clinton Cavers

Devon:

Chris Wheeldon

### Post-production Supervisor

Alison Odell

### 2nd Unit Director

Simon Bosanquet

### Assistant Directors

Jonathan Benson

Melvin Lind

Antony Ford

### Screenplay

Michael Austin

John Wells

### Script Supervisor

Libbie Barr

### Director of Photography

Freddie Francis

### Camera Operator

Gordon Hayman

### 2nd Unit:

Kevin Pike

Eddie Collins

### Editor

George Akers

### Production Designer

Michael Howells

### Art Director

Sam Riley

### Set Decorator

Sasha Schwedt

### Scenic Artist

Cecily Gatacre

### Storyboard Artist

Bill Stallion

### Special Effects Supervisor

Ian Wingrove

### Costume Design

Tom Rand

### Wardrobe Supervisor

Patrick Wheatley

### Make-up

Peter King

Nuala Conway

### Supervising Sound Editor

Eddy Joseph

### Dialogue Editors

Peter Best

Collin Miller

### Music Editor

Jupiter Sen

### Foley Editor

Peter Holt

### Sound Mixer

Peter Glossop

### Dubbing Mixer

Robin O'Donoghue

### Horse Master

Dave Goodey

### Cast

Phoebe Cates

Princess Caraboo

Jim Broadbent

Mr Worrall

Wendy Hughes

Mrs Worrall

Kevin Kline

Frixos

John Lithgow

Professor Wilkinson

Stephen Rea

Gutch

John Sessions

Prince Regent

John Wells

Reverend Hunt

Peter Eyre

Lord Apthorpe

Jacqueline Pearce

Lady Apthorpe

Roger Lloyd Pack

Magistrate Haythorne

John Lynch

Amon McCarthy

Arkie Whiteley

Betty

Kate Ashfield

Ella

Ewan Bailey

Ship's Captain

Annabel Brooks

Lady Neville

Anna Chancellor

Mrs Peake

Rachel Fielding

Mrs Benson

Anoushka Fooks

Charlotte

David Glover

Musician

Jerry Hall

Lady Motley

Jamie Harris

Tom

Peter Howell

Clerk of the Court

Barbara Keogh

Mrs Wilberforce

Anthony Van Laast

Pauline Thomas

Dressmakers

Philip Lester

Print Worker

Steven Macintosh

Harold

Tim McMullan

Light-Fingered

Aristocrat

Murray Melvin

Lord Motley

Dougray Scott

Dragon Captain

Andrew Secar

Mr Peake

David Sibley

Harrison

Ed Stobard

Footman

Stromboli

Fire Eater

Jacqueline Tong

Mrs Hunt

Edward Tudor-Pole

Lord Neville

8,730 feet

97 minutes

Dolby stereo

In colour

Devon, 1817. Two farm lads find a young woman wandering through the countryside wearing exotic clothes and speaking an unknown language. The local vicar takes her to Mrs Worrall at the manor house of Knole. Despite the hostility of the Greek butler, Frixos, Mrs Worrall is impressed with the stranger's bearing and lets her stay. But Mr Worrall, a banker, returns home next morning and packs her off to the Assizes as a vagrant.

In court, the woman conveys that she is Caraboo, a Javanese princess captured by pirates and enslaved, who jumped ship in the English Channel. Her story attracts the interest of John Gutch, a journalist. Mrs Worrall takes Caraboo back to Knole, where she is treated with honour. Her behaviour wins over Frixos and the other servants while Mr Worrall, whose bank is in trouble, sees the chance of lucrative trade with the Indies.

Gutch, though attracted to Caraboo, remains sceptical and consults Professor Wilkinson, an expert in exotic languages. At first dismissing Caraboo as a fraud, Wilkinson becomes besotted with her and is ignominiously ejected from Knole. Caraboo's fame spreads, attracting the interest of the Worralls' friends Lord and Lady Apthorpe. They abduct her for a grand ball at their house, where she dances with the Prince Regent.

Gutch has meanwhile traced Caraboo's real identity as a servant girl called Mary Baker. Gatecrashing the ball, he tries to warn her, but her employer identifies her from a newspaper report. Furious, Worrall has Mary arrested and condemned to death. With Mrs Worrall's help, Gutch blackmails Worrall with evidence of his bank frauds; Mary is released and given passage to America. Gutch sadly sees her off, but at the last moment joins her on board. Back at Knole, Frixos brings Mrs Worrall a news item: the Princess Caraboo, her ship blown off course, has been entertained by the exiled Napoleon on St Helena.

At the climax of *Princess Caraboo* the heroine is feted at a costume



Regent's luck: Kevin Kline

ball of garish vulgarity, presided over by the Prince Regent (a rouged and prancing John Sessions) in a get-up suggesting a ninth-rate touring production of *The Mikado*. Beside these grotesques, Caraboo's supposedly exotic garb appears the height of tasteful simplicity. Polite society, the film conveys, is all a masquerade, and a pretty inept one at that. The humble ex-servant, refugee from a home for reformed prostitutes, plays the game better and more convincingly than the sophisticates around her ever could. Which, of course, is precisely what they can't forgive her.

Michael Austin's film sketches in the background of a brutal and punitive age when begging meant flogging or jail, and capital crimes by the hundred clogged the statute book. (Parallels with present-day political tendencies aren't far to seek.) Bodies hang in the market square, a backdrop too common to excite much notice; armed dragons clatter across country, striking terror into even the middle classes. These oppressive images underline Gutch's warnings to Caraboo of the danger she runs if she's found out. Yet a sense of danger is just what's lacking: the tone of the film remains light and playful, the threat to Mary/Caraboo stated but never felt. The reassuringly happy ending casts its glow well in advance.

This is partly because *Princess Caraboo* isn't simply about masquerade, but much of the time plays like one. Austin has encouraged (or allowed) most of his cast to adopt high-pantomime style, with Jim Broadbent's Mr Worrall setting the pace. His wife's sudden insight into his "true nature" might carry more weight if he weren't such a fatuous oaf from the word go. As the butler Frixos, Kevin Kline walks off with the Tom Conti Award for Duff Greek Accent of the Year, while various well-loved exponents of the British eccentric school (Murray Melvin, John Wells, Edward Tudor-Pole) turn in their zany cameos. Only John Lithgow, as the lovelorn professor, manages to infuse a nominally buffoonish role with real pain and desolation.

Against this tuppence-coloured setting, Phoebe Cates' portrayal of the bogus princess stands out with appealing seriousness. Resisting the temptation to tip us the wink, she maintains the enigma to the very moment of defeat – though once unmasked, her character carries less conviction. The working-class girl denied an outlet for her imagination and turning it to an elaborate scam on society needed more fury and resentment than the script gives her scope for; here too, the film's cheery tone lets her down. Given a darker vision, a closer engagement with its period and the courage to ditch the happy ending, Michael Austin's film could have tapped into something resonant and disturbing. As it is, *Princess Caraboo* is consistently good-looking (the cinematography is by the veteran Freddie Francis), amusing – and forgettable.

Philip Kemp



# Rapa Nui

USA 1994

Director: Kevin Reynolds

**Certificate**  
12  
**Distributor**  
Entertainment  
**Production Company**  
Majestic Pictures  
TIG Productions  
RCS Video  
**Executive Producers**  
Barrie M. Osborne  
Guy East  
**Producers**  
Kevin Costner  
Jim Wilson  
**Production Co-ordinator**  
Carol Kim  
Australia:  
Barbara Ring  
**Australian Unit**  
**Production Manager**  
Julia Ritchie  
**Unit Production Manager**  
Zane Weiner  
**Unit Manager**  
Douglas C. Merrifield  
Australia:  
Tic Carroll  
**Location Manager**  
Ozmandias  
Australia:  
Robin Clifton  
**Post-production Supervisor**  
Rosemary Dority  
**2nd Unit Director**  
Mark Illsley  
**Assistant Directors**  
K.C. Hadenfield  
L. David Silva  
Fernando Castroman  
Mayra Lebron  
Pico Berkowitch  
2nd Unit:  
Neil Ravan  
Niko Haoa  
Australia:  
Keith Heygate  
**Casting**  
Elisabeth Leustig  
Associate:  
Susan Brown  
**Screenplay**  
Tim Rose Price  
Kevin Reynolds  
**Story**  
Kevin Reynolds  
**Script Supervisors**  
Samantha Clair  
Kirkeby  
2nd Unit:  
Rafael Benavente  
Vargas  
Australia:  
Judy Whitehead  
**Director of Photography**  
Stephen Windon  
**2nd Unit Director of Photography**  
Geoffrey Wharton  
**Camera Operator**  
Marc Spicer  
**Steadicam Operator**  
Paul Pandoulis  
**Visual Effects**  
Steven Roberts  
Robert Sandeman  
James Whitlam  
**Editor**  
Peter Boyle  
**Production Designer**  
George Liddle  
**Art Director**  
Ian Allan  
**Set Decorator**  
Brian Disting  
**Set Dresser**  
Isidoro Tucki  
Weaver Foreman:  
Isabel Pakarati  
Head Carver:  
Pedro Atan Paoa  
Draftsman:  
Cristian Arevalo  
**Scenic Artists**  
Ian Richter  
Peter Collias  
Sue Maybury

Guy Allain  
**Sculptures**  
Tony Lees  
**Special Effects Co-ordinator**  
Steven Richard  
Courtley  
**Special Effects**  
Tad Pride  
Gene Grigg  
Pauline Grebert  
Michael Clifford  
Monty Fieguth  
Arthur Spink Jnr  
Mirian Castro Correa  
Cristian Zderich  
John Whitfield-Moore  
Rodney Burke  
Thomas Lantz  
Carlos Olea Olivares  
Lyall Beckmann  
**Costume Design**  
John Bloomfield  
**Costume Supervisor**  
Martin Diaz Porras  
Key:  
Joaquin Montero  
Hernandez  
2nd Unit:  
Heather Williams  
Australia:  
Margot Wilson  
**Make-up**  
Key:  
Peter Frampton  
Amanda Knight  
Nikki Gooley  
Margarita Marchi  
Patricia Abarca Medina  
2nd Unit:  
Kathy Courtney  
Judy Allen  
**Hairstylists**  
Key:  
Paul D. Pattison  
Bec Simon  
Kristin Voumard  
2nd Unit:  
Trish Glover  
Veronica Vergara  
**Titles/Opticals**  
Opticals & Graphic  
**Music**  
Stewart Copeland  
**Orchestrations**  
Michael Andreas  
**Music Editor**  
Michael Dittrock  
**Sound Design**  
Lee Smith  
**Sound Editor**  
Karin Whittington  
**ADR Editor**  
Annabelle Sheehan  
**Foley Editor**  
Gary O'Grady  
**Dialogue Editors**  
Helen Brown  
Anthony Gray  
Libby Villa  
**Sound Mixer**  
Gary Wilkins  
**Foley/ADR Mixer**  
Simon Hewitt  
**Scoring Mixer**  
Jeff Seitz  
**Re-recording Mixers**  
L.A.:  
Steve Maslow  
Gregg Landaker  
Sydney:  
Phil Heywood  
Gethin Creagh  
Martin Oswin  
**Sound Effects Editors**  
Peter Townend  
Julius Chan  
**Foley Artists**  
Gary O'Grady  
Paul Huntingford  
**Advisers/Consultants**  
Supervising Tee  
Advisor/Archeologist:  
Claudio Cristino  
Anthropologist:  
Edmundo Edwards  
Architectural  
Archeologist:  
Reginald Budd

Archeologist:  
Patricia Vargas  
**Stunt Co-ordinator**  
Glenn Boswell  
Marine Co-ordinator:  
Michel Garcia  
Underwater  
Co-ordinator:  
Henry Garcia  
**Bird Handlers**  
Peter Harrison  
Shirley Metz  
Michel Sallabery  
Betsy Pincheira

**Cast**  
Jason Scott Lee  
Noro  
Esai Morales  
Make  
Sandrine Holt  
Ramana  
Eru Potaka-Dewes  
Ariki-Mau  
Emilio Yuki Hito  
Messenger  
Gordon Hatfield  
Riro  
Faenza Rouben  
Heke  
Hori Ahipene  
Overseer  
Chiefly Elkington  
Fisherman  
Huiana Rewa  
Old Woman  
George Henare  
Tupa  
Rawiri Paratene  
Pete Smith  
Priests  
Mario Gaoa  
Cliff Curtis  
Willie Davis  
Short Ears

Lawrence Makoare  
Atta  
Te Whanui Skipwith  
Old Short Ear  
Nathaniel Lees  
Grant McFarland  
Wassie Shortland  
Long Ear Chiefs  
Tania Simon  
Koreto  
Rena Owen  
Hitirenga  
Zac Wallace  
Haoa  
Rakai Karaitiana  
Pure White  
Shane Dawson  
Mud Colour  
Henry Yaeoso  
Half & Half  
Angela Gribben  
Long Ear Girl  
Karaitiana Beazley  
Makita  
Jade Clayton  
Ngara  
Jenni Heka  
Long Ear Girl  
Pitake Tuki  
Timid Short Ear  
Liseli Mutti  
Pua  
Michael Yost  
Young Long Ear Boy

9.587 feet  
107 minutes

Dolby stereo  
In colour  
Prints by  
Technicolor

In 1722, the Dutch discovered a treeless island filled with giant statues, which they named Easter Island. The inhabitants, who called the island Rapa Nui, believed they were the only people on earth. Sixty-two years before, the inhabitants were divided into two classes – the Long Ear nobility and the Short Ear labourers who made huge stone monoliths as a tribute to the island's first settler. Legend had it that he would return in a white canoe to lead his people to a new world.

Noro is a Long Ear chosen by Chief Ariki-Mau to take part in the annual 'Birdman race', in which a member of each Long Ear tribe races to bring back an egg laid by one of the island's sunbirds. Whoever wins becomes the powerful Birdman. Noro agrees to enter if he is allowed to marry Ramana, a Short Ear girl he has been seeing in secret. She is banished to the tiny dark Cave of the White Virgin for the six months before the race, and if she survives she can marry Noro.

Ariki-Mau and his high priest tell the Short Ears that they must build another, taller statue to please the gods. In the process, the island's remaining trees are sacrificed, and food becomes scarce. Forced to work day and night, they become rebellious, and to placate them Ariki Mau allows one Short Ear to enter the Birdman race. Make enters, as he also wants to win Ramana's hand, although he knows he will be put to death if he loses.

A weak and blind Ramana is released from the cave. The racers run down sheer cliffs and plunge into the surf below, swim to the rock for the eggs, then return to the island. Many don't make it and only Noro and Make are



Easter egg race: Jason Scott Lee, Sandrine Holt

left at the end. Make wins, but as he walks to the high priest, he trips and his egg is smashed. Noro is declared the winner, and he spares Make's life. Ariki-Mau sees an iceberg has drifted near the island. Believing it is the legendary white canoe, he sails out to live there. The high priest goes to the Short Ear village to demand more work from them, but they capture and kill him, then go to the other villages and burn them. They smash the largest statues to show that the Long Ears no longer have control. Ramana and Noro escape from the destroyed island in a canoe to start a new life elsewhere.

Kevin Reynolds may have believed that teaming up with pal Kevin Costner again after their successful outing *Robin Hood: Prince Of Thieves* was a good idea, but on the basis of *Rapa Nui*, it is probably better that the two Kevins go their separate ways. Of course, *Robin Hood* had Costner starring and Reynolds directing, whereas in this instance, Costner simply takes a back seat as producer, leaving Reynolds to direct lesser-known actors Jason Scott Lee and Esai Morales.

The tale of what could have happened on the island of Rapa Nui is not only hampered by its lack of a weighty lead, but also by its erratic cast choices. Morales and Lee handle themselves admirably as the two competing warriors, but (as happened in *Robin Hood*), they are surrounded by tribesmen speaking in Brooklyn, West Country and Australian accents. One can only surmise that the casting director's main specification was that the actors should look good in their very brief leather thongs.

In fact, both cast and production do look luscious, with bronzen figures toiling over the stone statues against the stark cliffs and beautiful waters of Easter Island. The prosthetic work used to create the unusually-shaped ears of the Long Ear tribe is flawless, while the tribes' painted faces add vibrant colour to the surroundings. All of this would be very well if this were a documentary or a travelogue, but it is not. Reynolds originally got the idea for the film

from watching a TV documentary on the island, but he has constructed little story around that basic idea and instead has come up with a tale that could have taken place anywhere. Transfer *Rapa Nui* to New York and it could be the tale of a Shark and a Jet coming to blows.

Reynolds' forte is action rather than dialogue, judging from *Robin Hood* and the Birdman race sequences in *Rapa Nui*. Here, Reynolds manages to combine drama and tension, and the film only flags in one scene, when one of the competitors is chased and then chopped by a shark, in true *Jaws* fashion. The scenes showing the islanders making and transporting the statues are also magnificent, although somewhat marred now that it transpires Reynolds and his production team may be sued by the present-day residents of the island for destroying part of their land while making the movie.

Reynolds concentrates on the spectacle, at the expense of the more interesting parts of the storyline – the idea that the islanders were destroying their home by cutting down trees for logs to transport their worthless but beautiful monoliths, and the race and class antagonism between the two tribes. The script simply boils all of this down to the cliché of a love triangle between Noro, Make and Ramana. If Reynolds had intended to make a point about how easy it is to destroy the landscape by building and expanding, he could have found a better way of expressing it than Noro getting misty-eyed because the tree he carved his and his girlfriend's initials on is next for the chop.

Unfortunate moments like this pepper the movie, none of them are more ludicrous than when the chief of the village decides to leave and make his home on an iceberg that has appeared out of nowhere in warm waters. In fact, it is Eru Potaka-Dewes as chief Ariki-Mau who suffers most on Rapa Nui, as the unfortunate actor burdened with lines like, "Leave me alone, I'm going off to read my chicken entrails!"

Joanna Berry



# La Reine Margot

France/Germany/Italy 1994

Director: Patrice Chéreau

**Certificate**  
18

**Distributor**  
Guild

**Production Companies**  
Renn Productions/  
France 2 Cinéma/  
D.A. Films (France)/  
NEF Filmproduktion/  
Degeto (Germany)/ R.C.S.  
Films & TV (Italy)  
With the participation of  
Centre National de la  
Cinématographie  
Canal +

**Executive Producer**  
Pierre Grunstein

**Production Co-ordinator**  
Pierre Trémouille

**Production Manager**  
Jean-Claude Bourlat

**Unit Production Managers**  
Catherine Pierrat  
Alain Artur

**Location Production Manager**  
Jean-René Coulon

**2nd Unit Director**  
Jérôme Enrico

**Assistant Directors**  
Jérôme Enrico  
Emmanuel Hamon  
Dominique Furge  
Portugal:  
João Pedro Ruivo

**Costing**  
France:  
Margot Capelier  
Germany:  
Ann Dorthé Braker  
Italy:  
Mirta Guarnaschelli

**Screenplay/Adaptation**  
Danièle Thompson

**Patrice Chéreau**  
Based on the novel by  
Alexandre Dumas

**Dialogue**  
Danièle Thompson

**Script Supervisor**  
Suzanne Durrenberger

**Director of Photography**  
Philippe Rousselot

**Camera Operators**  
Marc Koninckx  
Jean-Pierre Barsonsky

**Optical Effects**  
Frédéric Moreau

**Editors**  
François Gédigier  
Hélène Viard

**Production Designers**  
Richard Peduzzi  
Olivier Radot

**Set Decorator**  
Sophie Martel

**Special Effects**  
Georges Demetrau

**Costume Design**  
Moïse Bickel

**Costume Supervisor**  
Jean-Daniel Vuillemoz

**Make-up Design**  
Kuno Schlegelmilch  
Thi-Loan Nguyen

**Special Make-up Effects**  
Viktor Leitenbauer

**Hair Design**  
Kuno Schlegelmilch  
Fabienne Bressan

**Wigs**  
Fabienne Bressan

**Special Effect:**  
Viktor Leitenbauer

**Music**  
Goran Bregovic

**Song**  
"Elohi" by Ofra Haza,  
Goran Bregovic,  
performed by Ofra Haza

**Sound Design**  
Guillaume Sciana  
Dominique Hennequin

**Dialogue Editor**  
Sylvie Gadmer

**ADR Editor**  
Michel Filippi

**Foley Editor**  
Pascal Chauvin

**Sound Mixer**  
Joël Rangon

**Sound Effects Editors**  
Gérard Hardy

**Christian Dior**  
**Advisors**  
Arms:  
Christophe Maratier  
Animals:  
Pierre Cadéac  
**Stunt Co-ordinator**  
Philippe Guéan  
**Fencing Master**  
Raoul Billerey  
**Horseman Supervisor**  
Mario Luraschi  
**Animal Manager**  
François Hardy

**Cast**  
Isabelle Adjani  
Marguerite de Valois  
Daniel Auteuil  
Henri de Navarre  
Jean-Hugues Anglade  
Charles IX  
Vincent Perez  
La Môle  
Virna Lisi  
Catherine de Médici  
Dominique Blanc  
Henriette de Nevers  
Pascal Greggory  
Anjou  
Claudio Amendola  
Coconnas  
Miguel Bosé  
Guise  
Asia Argento  
Charlotte de Saue  
Julien Rassam  
Alençon  
Thomas Kretschmann  
Nançay  
Jean-Claude Brialy  
Coligny  
Jean-Philippe Ecoffey  
Condé  
Albano Guasetta  
Orthon  
Johan Leysen  
Maurevel  
Dörte Lyssowski  
Marie Touchet  
Michelle Marquais  
Nurse  
Laure Marsac  
Antoinette  
Alexis Nitzer  
Barbet Schroeder  
Advisors  
Emmanuel Salinger  
Du Bartas  
Jean-Marc Stehle  
Innkeeper  
Otto Tausig  
Mendès  
Bruno Todeschini  
Armagnac  
Tolsty  
Hangman  
Bernard Verley  
Cardinal  
Ulrich Wildgruber  
René  
Laurent Arnal  
Gérard Berlioz  
Christophe Bernard  
Marian Blicharz  
Daniel Breton  
Pierre Brilliot  
Valeria Bruni-Tedeschi  
Cécile Caillaud  
Marc Citti  
Grégoire Colin  
Erwan Dujardin  
Jean Douchet  
Philippe Duclos  
Marina Golovine  
Zygmunt Kargol  
Carlos Lopez  
Orazio Massaro  
Roman Massine  
Charles Nelson  
Bernard Nissile  
Julie-Anne Rauth  
Jean-Michel Tavernier  
Béatrice Toussaint  
Mélanie Vaudaine  
Nicolas Vaude

**14,512 feet**  
**162 minutes**

**Dolby stereo**  
**In colour**  
**Subtitles**

Paris, August 18, 1572. Marguerite de Valois (Margot), sister of Charles IX, the Catholic King of France and daughter of Catherine de Medici, is to marry the Protestant Duke, Henri de Navarre, in a ceremony arranged to appease the two warring religious factions. Marguerite, forced to marry a man she does not love, acquiesces only under pressure but insists that she will not share the conjugal bed with her new husband, preferring the attentions of her lover, the ruthless, bloodthirsty Duc de Guise.

Catherine de Medici wishes to neutralise the perceived Protestant threat by killing their leaders. As King, Charles – though indecisive and half-mad – declares that the deaths of the leaders alone is insufficient; he wants all of them dead, so that not a single Protestant survives to blame him. Despite his words being uttered while in the throes of a fit, and under coercive pressure from the Dukes of Anjou, Guise and Tavannes, they are taken as the royal assent to what will become known as the Saint Bartholomew's Day Massacre.

On August 23 and 24 a militia of Catholic courtiers and the Parisian people indiscriminately slaughter over 6,000 Protestants, including many of the Huguenot guests at Margot's wedding. Navarre is saved from the bloodshed by the attentions of Margot and her courtiers. However, she also attends to a badly wounded young Protestant, La Môle, who she realises is the same man she picked up several days previously when scouring the streets for casual amorous encounters. They fall in love and she helps him escape to Holland.

During a hunting accident Navarre saves the life of Charles and earns the King's trust, friendship and protection. However, Catherine is plotting to have Navarre killed with a slow-acting poison secreted into the pages of a hunting book. She entrusts the task to her youngest son, the Duc d'Alençon. Unexpectedly, the King, rather than Navarre, handles the book. He dies a slow and agonising death, attended to by Margot. La Môle has returned from Holland to find Margot but is charged with regicide and is executed with his friend Coconnas. Margot visits the decapitated body, taking his head to have it embalmed. Reconciled with her husband, sickened by Catherine de Medici's savagery, Margot flees the court to join the Protestant camp.

Blood, poison and perfume: *La Reine Margot* is a suppurating broth of all three in which the idea of the 'body politic' receives a highly physical twist. Patrice Chéreau has chosen to film the close, hermetic and murderous life of the French court at the time of Catherine de Medici as a scrum of fluid alliances and shifting allegiances. These are negotiated against the backdrop of a coerced marriage of political convenience (Marguerite de Valois to Henri de Navarre), feral, in-bred desire (Catherine de Medici for her son Henri, Duc d'Anjou;

the brothers for their sister Margot), merciless religious hatred (the court is Catholic, Navarre is Protestant), focused by the growing horror and despair of the young queen.

Despite having failed as the French entry to set this year's Cannes Festival alight – the Best Supporting Actress award to Virna Lisi being widely (and condescendingly) seen as a token bauble – *La Reine Margot* has gone on to reap both critical and commercial acclaim in France. As yet another in the seemingly interminable cycle of heritage films with which Claude Berri – here in the role of producer – has become synonymous, the film arrives here trailing the baggage of expectations associated with others of its genre, but succeeds in satisfyingly short-circuiting them.

Chéreau himself has stressed his desire to avoid reproducing in his own film what *Cahiers du cinéma* has referred to as "retro-nostalgia", and has spoken in interviews of using a "prophylactic measure" to circumvent it – "Every time an image from a TV film on Catherine de Medici came to mind I would think of the three *Godfather* films, of *Mean Streets* and *GoodFellas*." The Medicis as Mafia clan – it's a nice idea, and one that has clearly shaped the film's depiction of the family as the arena of morbid power-play, while also allowing it to pull clear of the dread gravitational pull of its generic satellites. The heritage film tends to rely on set-ups that maximise its qualities of spectacle – high angles, mid-long shots – to the end of privileging illustrative tableaux, while also placing the spectator in an Olympian and curiously touristic position. (It is no coincidence that the 'heritage film' coincides precisely with the trend for restaging national history and culture in theme parks.) Conversely, the Mafia film comes in close and claustrophobic, uses two-shots, close-ups and privileges interior spaces. That this strategy places the spectator in a more intimate relationship to the action is something that has not been lost on Chéreau, who brings his camera in among the bodies, knitting in and out of the

bloodlines and circuits of power. *La Reine Margot's* mise en scène is one in which the spectator experiences a physical disorientation to match that of the characters themselves and, interestingly, the few moments when the film does lapse into a kind of painterly academicism (Vermeer, Zurburan) are those when the action shifts beyond the walls of the Palais du Louvre to Holland.

The uncomfortable intimacy that the film encourages brings out some remarkable performances; Lisi, clad in black throughout, plays Catherine as a woman whose mourning is as constant as her venomous affections. When it becomes clear that the poison she intended for Navarre has mistakenly infected her eldest son, the vacillating, bloodthirsty Charles, a low-angle shot has her lurking in the gallery of the Cathedral casting a vampiric shadow – Queen Nosferatu, her hair scraped cruelly back to show a Max Schreck pate. Jean-Hugues Anglade's Charles is one of the film's real revelations; those with memories of his dream-wimp boyfriends in *Betty Blue* and *Nikita* will barely recognise him here. His is a performance of real range and authority, half slobbering dungeon freak barely ennobled by filthy lace and half strangely sympathetic victim of his mother's appalling plots. And at the centre of all the mayhem is Adjani's Margot, her face a set of nested ovals that coalesce to express muted horror, her white robes forever absorbing the blood of others including that of La Môle, her Protestant lover, whose severed head she cradles in her lap after his execution, just as she absorbs into her clothes the sweated blood of the slow-poisoned King.

Grand guignol, cloak and dagger, cruel Mafia claustrophobia: *La Reine Margot* is nothing if not explicit about power and religious hatred. Its currency is blood, its disguises perfume and lace; parricide, regicide and genocide its manifest destiny. Close to the bone, this is the shocking, slightly cold but undeniably powerful apotheosis of the French heritage film.

Chris Darke



Arsenic and old lace: Jean-Hugues Anglade, Isabelle Adjani



# The River Wild

USA 1994

Director: Curtis Hanson

**Certificate**  
12  
**Distributor**  
UIP  
**Production Company**  
Turman-Foster  
Company  
**Executive Producers**  
Ilona Herzberg  
Ray Hartwick  
**Producers**  
David Foster  
Lawrence Turman  
**Co-producer**  
Denis O'Neill  
**Production Co-ordinators**  
Dana Lynne Taylor  
Helen Ostenberg  
Cynthia von Suhr  
Montana/Oregon  
Co-ordinator:  
Marjorie Webster  
**Underwater Unit Production Manager**  
Terry Thompson  
**River Unit Supervisors**  
John Wasson  
Steve Jones  
**Unit Production Managers**  
Ray Hartwick  
Larry DeWaa  
**Location Managers**  
Ken Levine  
Joel Marx  
James Tadevic  
Randy Unger  
Wayne Mumford  
**Post-production Supervisor**  
Doreen A. Dixon  
**2nd Unit Director**  
Max Kleven  
**Assistant Directors**  
Tom Mack  
David Kelley  
C.C. Barnes  
2nd Unit:  
Robert Schick  
**Casting**  
Nancy Klopner  
**Screenplay**  
Denis O'Neill  
**Script Supervisor**  
Leslie Park  
2nd Unit:  
Judith Saunders  
Marilyn Giardino  
Patti Dalzell  
**Director of Photography**  
Robert Elswit  
Underwater Unit:  
Al Giddings  
**Additional Photography**  
Kim Marks  
**Camera Operator**  
Michael Stone  
**Editor**  
Joe Hutshing  
David Brenner  
**Production Designer**  
Bill Kenney  
**Art Director**  
Mark Mansbridge  
**Set Design**  
William Hiney  
**Set Decorator**  
Rick T. Gentz  
**Set Dressers**  
John Rozman  
Ronald Sica  
**Storyboard Artists**  
Tom Cranham  
Fred Lucky  
**Special Effects Supervisor**  
Roy Arbogast  
**Special Effects**  
Michael N. Arbogast  
Dave Blitstein  
Rich E. Cordobes  
William E. Dawson  
Jaime Galindo  
E. Hui  
William D. Lee  
K.C. Pritchett  
Richard S. Wood  
**Costume Design**  
Marlene Stewart

**Costume Supervisors**  
Christopher Lawrence  
Wingate Jones  
**Make-up**  
James R. Kail  
Richard Snell  
**Hair/Make-up**  
Donna Barrett Gilbert  
Patricia Vecchio  
**Hair/Make-up**  
J. Roy Helland  
**Titles/Opticals**  
Pacific Title  
**Music Composer/Conductor**  
Jerry Goldsmith  
**Orchestrations**  
Arthur Morton  
Alexander Courage  
**Music Supervisor**  
Carol Fenelon  
**Music Editor**  
Ken Hall  
**Songs/Music Extracts**  
"Cope" by David Gibbs,  
Paul Brouwer, Steve  
Hurley, Paul Hurley,  
performed by Gigolo  
Aunts; "Dollar Bill"  
by Mark Lanegan, Van  
Conner, performed by  
Screaming Trees;  
"Psalm 69" by Al  
Jourgensen, Paul  
Barker, performed by  
Ministry; "The Water  
is Wide" performed  
by 1) Paul Cantelon,  
2) The Cowboy Junkies  
**Supervising Sound Editors**  
Charles L. Campbell  
Louis Edemann  
**Sound Editors**  
Chuck Neely  
Leonard T. Geschke  
Nils C. Jensen  
Jeff Clark  
Albert Gasser  
Don Malouf  
Kerry Dean Williams  
**ADR Supervisor**  
Larry Singer  
**ADR Editors**  
Gail Clark  
Andrea Horta  
**ADR Group Co-ordinator**  
Mickie McGowan  
**ADR Mixers**  
Chris Tucker  
David Boulton  
**Foley Mixer**  
Mary Jo Lang  
**Sound Mixers**  
Ivan Sharrock  
Kirk Francis  
**Sound Re-recorders**  
Andy Nelson  
Anna Behlmer  
Tom Perry  
**Sound Effects**  
Mel Neiman  
**Foley Artists**  
John Roesch  
Hilda Hodges  
**Stunt Co-ordinator**  
Max Kleven  
**Animal Trainers**  
Stacey Brehm  
Cathy McCallum  
Jackie Kaptan

**Cast**  
**Meryl Streep**  
Gail  
**Joseph Mazzello**  
Roarke  
**Stephanie Sawyer**  
Willa  
**Buffy**  
Maggie  
**David Strathairn**  
Tom  
**Elizabeth Hoffman**  
Gail's Mother  
**Victor H. Galloway**  
Gail's Father

Diane Delano  
Thomas F. Duffy  
Rangers  
Kevin Bacon  
Wade  
John C. Reilly  
Terry  
William Lucking  
Frank  
Benjamin Bratt  
Ranger Johnny

Paul Cantelon  
Violinist  
Glenn Morshower  
Policeman

10,058 feet  
111 minutes

Dolby stereo  
In colour  
Anamorphic

Gail and Tom are a husband and wife undergoing a mid-marriage crisis because of the pressures of Tom's architectural job. For his birthday, they are due to take their son Roarke on a white-water rafting expedition in rural Colorado, where Gail grew up. At the last minute, work forces Tom to back out, leaving a disappointed Gail and Roarke to go it alone. The two arrive in Colorado and meet Gail's mother and deaf father, before setting off on their trip; at the last minute, Tom manages to join them.

Also journeying down the river are three ominous men - Wade, Terry and their guide Frank. Frank mysteriously disappears from the party and Wade, who has charmed Roarke into idolising him, manages to enlist Gail - who used to be a river guide herself - into helping him navigate the river. The more Roarke falls under Wade's spell, however, the more suspicious Tom and Gail become. They attempt, unsuccessfully, to shake off their travelling companions, who turn out to be armed robbers on the run with \$250,000 of stolen money. Wade and Terry take the family hostage, forcing Gail to guide them down the river and through a pass of rapids so treacherous that they haven't been navigated for years. That night Tom manages to escape and together with Maggie, the family dog, he prepares an ambush to save his wife and son on the other end of the rapids.

Meanwhile, Wade, believing he has managed to kill Tom during his escape, shoots an over-eager Parks Ranger. He, Terry and their hostages make it through the rapids, but are ambushed by Tom at the other side. In the ensuing fight, Gail shoots Wade, and Terry is captured by the police. Tom, Gail and Roarke are reunited as a family by their experiences.

For years the conservative right has decried Hollywood for its degenerate reliance on sex and violence, the main genre culprit being the action flick. Watching *The River Wild*, however, one wonders what all the fuss is about: this is nakedly wholesome action, and it comes off as one part outward-bound promotional video, two parts Boys' Own adventure for the family: the Thrilling Three joined by Maggie the Wonderdog.

*The River Wild* is quite so transparent because, like most Hollywood cod allegories, it dutifully leaves behind a trail of cheap metaphors. Gail's mother counsels her on her failing marriage by declaring that feminine strength is the ability to stick by your man, no matter how big a shit he might be. All this is given the stamp of honest, rural wisdom by a background panorama of flowing corn and glacial blue skies.

Roarke, on the other hand, is identified as the Achilles heel of the family because he wears a baseball cap for Ministry - an alternative/industrial band, emblematic of adolescent restlessness and contemporary decadence in general. Sure enough, Wade woos Roarke, and thus infiltrates the family, by giving him a Lollapalooza forage cap and playing nondescript grunge tunes. Modern music is an evil, hypnotic thing that suckers the young and pollutes the great outdoors.

The great outdoors is the thing here. It restores a marriage and heals a family. This is most apparent in Tom's Robert Bly transformation from non-communicative, spineless urban professional into a man of trekkin', fightin', cave-paintin' primal ingenuity. The plainest sign that he has become a better man is that Maggie, the family dog, no longer ignores her ineffectual master but faithfully follows him across mountains and through icy streams. Gail proves her conversion to a purer state in the most traditional Hollywood terms: she finally summons up the guts to gun Tom down. (*Die Hard*, *True Lies*, *Under Siege* - in action movies, killing people commonly signifies maturity).

During the body of the film, in which family and crooks accompany each other down the river, director Curtis Hanson tries his hand at tight-packed psychology. Wade's interest in Gail's navigational skills is fraught with sexual tension (namely a Timotei scene in which Wade ogles the naked Gail taking a dip in a rock pool) and, when Tom is believed dead, wife and son take on a vaguely existential do-or-die mentality while he shadows them downstream devising a rescue plan. But the film's mechanisms are so determinedly pat and its sympathies so blandly safe that the most obvious moral of the story seems to be: family members under threat must wear radio mikes at all times.

*The River Wild* is *Knife in the Water* for the family values set. The film's closing frame is of the family in a golden-silhouetted embrace against a backdrop of cresting torrents. But, for all its shampoo-commercial imagery of the torrential waves of reawakening, this is a positively unappealing experience.

**Olly Blackburn**



Without a paddle: Meryl Streep

# Second Best

USA 1993

Director: Chris Menges

**Certificate**  
12  
**Distributor**  
Warner Bros  
**Production Company**  
Regency  
Enterprises/Alcor Films  
present  
A Fron Film production  
For Monarchy  
Enterprises  
**Executive Producer**  
Arnon Milchan  
**Producer**  
Sarah Radclyffe  
**Executive in Charge of Production**  
Victoria Pearman  
**Associate Producer**  
Judy Freeman  
**Production Supervisor**  
Chris Thompson  
**Production Co-ordinator**  
Tori Parry  
**Location Manager**  
Guy Tannahill  
**Post-production Supervisor**  
Michael Solinger  
**Assistant Directors**  
Waldo Roeg  
Max Keene  
Stuart Renfrew  
**Casting**  
Susie Figgis  
Additional:  
Sarah Bird  
**Screenplay**  
David Cook  
Based on his novel  
**Script Supervisor**  
Penny Eyles  
**Director of Photography**  
Ashley Rowe  
**Camera Operator**  
Jeremy Gee  
**Steadicam Operators**  
Peter Robertson  
Andy Shuttleworth  
**Opticals**  
The Computer Film  
Company  
**Editor**  
George Akers  
**Production Designer**  
Michael Howells  
**Art Director**  
Roger Thomas  
**Set Decorator**  
Sam Riley  
**Costume Design**  
Nic Ede  
**Wardrobe Supervisor**  
Stewart Meachem  
**Make-up/Hair**  
Design:  
Jenny Shircore  
Artist:  
Ivana Primorac  
**Titles**  
Peter Watson  
Associates  
**Music**  
Simon Boswell  
**Music Conductor**  
Neil Thomson  
**Orchestrations**  
Simon Boswell  
Simon Gabriel  
**Music Editor**  
Jupiter Sen  
**Songs**  
"Imagination",  
"Saturday Night  
Forever" by and  
performed by Simon  
Boswell; "La Capinera"  
performed by  
Josephine Turminia,  
Jimmy Dorsey and  
His Orchestra  
**Supervising Sound Editor**  
Peter Best  
**Sound Editor**  
Ean Wood  
**Sound Mixer**  
Peter Glossop

Dolby stereo  
consultant:  
Ray Gillon  
**Sound Re-recorder**  
Robin O'Donoghue

**Cast**  
**William Hurt**  
Graham  
**John Hurt**  
Uncle Turpin  
**Chris Cleary Miles**  
James  
**Nathan Yapp**  
Jimmy  
**Keith Allen**  
John  
**Doris Irving**  
Adoption Shop  
Volunteer  
**Alfred Lynch**  
Edward  
**Rachel Freeman**  
Elsie  
**Gus Troakes**  
Jeff  
**Mossie Smith**  
Lynn  
**Martin Troakes**  
Colin  
**James Warrior**  
Senior Social Worker  
**Jane Horrocks**  
Debbie  
**Sham Dingwall**  
Graham, age 20  
**Paul Wilson**  
Colin, age 20  
**Alan Cumming**  
Bernard  
**Jake Owen**  
Jimmy, age 3  
**Sophie Bix**  
Mury  
**Prunella Scales**  
Margery  
**Jennifer Whitefoot**  
Tina  
**Jubal Bright**  
Leggo  
**Colin Bufton**  
Rusty  
**Richard Storr**  
Jed  
**Owen Shepherd**  
Fang  
**Richard Murray**  
Vernon  
**Ross Edwards**  
Pimple  
**Bryn Askham**  
Chris  
**Geoffrey Leesley**  
Eric  
**Doris Hare**  
Mrs Hawkins  
**Shirley King**  
Enid  
**Adam Willis**  
Graham, age 12  
**Giles Emmerson**  
Vicar  
**Mrs George**  
Herself  
**Herys Hughes**  
Maureen  
**Philip Swancote**  
Policeman  
**Anne Morrish**  
Lizzie  
**Peter Copley**  
Percy  
**Esther Coles**  
Staff Nurse  
**Jodhi May**  
Alice  
**Tessa Gearing**  
Mrs Hilliard

9,458 feet  
105 minutes

Dolby stereo  
In colour  
Technicolor



James, a young boy, is whisked away from the school playground by his runaway father, John. Together, they hide out in the woods. Eventually, John decides to give himself up to the police. James is taken into care. Graham Holt, a shy, middle-aged postmaster living in a small Welsh village, wants to adopt a child and applies to become a father to James. Initially, the social workers are sceptical about Holt's qualifications, but he manages to convince them he deserves at least a trial.

On his first visits to Holt's home, James is well-behaved. Holt has been warned that he is a "problem child" – the boy is still obsessed with his real father and haunted by his mother's suicide. Nevertheless, the two establish a rapport, going camping together and tracking down each other's relatives. James realises that Holt also had an unhappy childhood and treats him with a measure of sympathy.

After the so-called "honeymoon period", James's behaviour deteriorates. He is prone to violent outbursts and makes it very clear to Holt that his loyalties lie first and foremost with his real father. James receives a letter from his father consenting to the adoption; he allows Holt to read it. Not long afterwards, he comes to live with Holt permanently and starts at the local school.

One day, James's father arrives in the post office, haggard and ill. He explains to Holt that he has been in and out of prison several times, but thought it best to conceal the fact from his son. He now has Aids and simply wants to see James again before he dies. Holt allows him to stay. However, when James comes back from school and is re-introduced to the father he idolised, he is shocked and disgusted by his illness. In the middle of the night, he runs off and hides in a hole in the woods. Holt eventually finds him, curled up and half frozen. The two sleep in the woods. The next morning, as they head back to Holt's home, Holt makes it clear to James that the adoption can only work if the boy treats him as a real father.

William Hurt knows how to play in minor key, as he showed in *The Accidental Tourist*. Nevertheless, it comes as a slight surprise to see the former Oscar winner transformed into a tousle-haired, anorak-wearing Welsh postmaster. Not that Hurt gives a bad or showy performance – although his accent wavers at times, he approaches his role in quiet, understated fashion, moving slowly and enunciating his words in a laborious monotone. He captures perfectly his character's anguish and disappointment in himself: his sense that he was always destined to be "second best".

But stars have baggage attached. Each new part they play is refracted, at least in fans' eyes, through its predecessors. In a downbeat, naturalistic drama such as *Second Best*, this is a distraction. Hurt's self-restraint risks seeming mannered, a star's conceit as he is cast against type. The problem is

heightened by his lack of rapport with his would-be foster son in the film. As James, the "problem child", Chris Cleary Miles is good at tantrums, but less effective when it comes to suggesting the character's vulnerability. It is perhaps an unfair comparison to make, but the performance that director Chris Menges elicits from him is nowhere near as convincing as the one Ken Loach managed to coax out of David Bradley in a similar part in *Kes*.

The parallels with Loach's picture, which Menges photographed, are apparent. As in *Kes*, landscape is used in symbolic fashion. The woods and hills are depicted as untrammelled, edenic territory where the boy can escape the strictures of adults. Perhaps, though, *Second Best* is a little too picturesque. Compared with Menges' directorial debut, the Shawn Slovo story *A World Apart*, in which the child's experiences growing up during apartheid are put in context by the political struggle going on around her, the drama here seems confined, even claustrophobic. David Cook's adaptation of his own novel is short on incident. The often inscrutable emotions of the characters are what matters. Elliptical flashback sequences, poetic motifs (for instance, time-lapse images of clouds racing across the sky) and various mementos – shells, torn photographs, old army emblems – are used to hint at the sense of loss Holt and James both feel. Throwaway details – the food Holt eats, his oppressive daily routine – take on weighty significance.

"Right now, you're not even a candidate to adopt my stick insect," Debbie, the social worker, barks out at a bewildered-looking Holt when he first tries to foster the boy. On one level, *Second Best* is yet another saga about a repressed, middle-aged man learning to confront his feelings and thereby redeeming his life. A curious aspect to the story is the way women are excluded. James is depicted as a budding little misogynist. He has nothing but hostility for his mother and for anybody who reminds him of her. In flashbacks to her suicide, we're not even shown her face. This particular psycho-drama is about fathers and sons. The boys don't seem to be able to work out their problems when there are women around.

It is hard not to admire the skill with which the film is crafted. Menges eschews the easy options of melodrama, but still manages to tell his story in pictures: the opening sequence, in which James's father plucks him away from school and hides out with him in the woods, features virtually no dialogue. The Welsh landscapes are lovingly photographed. It is also intriguing to see William Hurt act alongside the likes of Nerys Hughes, Jane Horrocks and Keith Allen. However, just as Hurt's performance seems too studied in its modesty, there is something contrived about *Second Best* as a whole that stops it from tugging at the emotions in the way that might have been expected.

Geoffrey Macnab

## Shallow Grave

United Kingdom 1994

Director: Danny Boyle

Certificate  
18

Distributor  
Rank

Production Company  
Channel Four Films  
In association with  
Glasgow Film Fund  
present

A Fimgent Film

Producer

Andrew MacDonald

Production Co-ordinator

Yvonne McParland

Production Manager

Sara Barr

Location Manager

Fran Robertson

Post-production Supervisor

Steve Barker

Assistant Directors

Ian Madden

Alison Goring

Stephen Docherty

Casting

Sarah Trevis

Screenplay

John Hodge

Script Supervisor

Anne Coulter

Director of Photography

Brian Tufano

Special Visual Effects

Tony Steers

Editor

Masahiro Hirakubo

Production Designer

Kave Quinn

Art Director

Zoe MacLeod

Scenic Artist

Stuart Clark

Storyboard Artist

John Amabile

Costume Design

Kate Carin

Wardrobe Supervisor

John Norster

Make-up

Graham Johnston

Special Make-up Effects

Grant Mason

Title Design

Morag Myerscough

Music

Simon Boswell

Music Supervisor

Gemma Dempsey

Songs

"Shallow Grave",

"Release the Dub"

by Neil Barnes, Paul

Daley, performed by

Leftfield; "Happy

Heart" by James Last,

Jackie Rae, performed

by Andy Williams;

"My Baby Just Cares

For Me" by G. Kahn,

W. Donaldson,

performed by Nina

Simone

Sound Editors

Nigel Galt

Digital:

Paul Conway

Foley Editor

Richard Fettes

Sound Mixer

Colin Nicholson

Sound Re-recorders

Brian Saunders

Ray Merrin

Stunt Co-ordinator

Clive Curtis

Cast

Kerry Fox

Juliet Miller

Christopher Eccleston

David Stephens

Ewan McGregor

Alex Law

Ken Stott

Detective Inspector

McCall

Keith Allen

Hugo

Colin McCredie

Cameron

Victoria Nairn

Gary Lewis

Visitors

Jean Marie Coffey

Goth

Peter Mullan

Andy

Leonard O'Malley

Tim

David Scouler

Cash Machine Victim

Grant Glendinning

Bath Victim

Robert David MacDonald

Lumsden

Frances Low

Doctor

Bill Denistoun

Master of Ceremonies

John Bett

Brian McKinley

Tony Curran

Travel Agent

Elspeth Cameron

Elderly Woman

Paul Doonan

Newspaper Office Boy

Billy Riddoch

Newspaper Editor

Kenneth Bryans

Police Officer

John Hodge

D.C. Mitchell

John Carmichael and

His Band

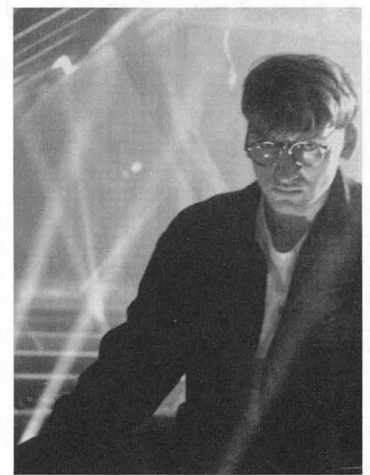
Themselves

8,322 feet

92 minutes

Dolby stereo

In colour



Loft insulation: Christopher Eccleston

uneasy. Meanwhile two heavies, Goth and Andy, are on the trail of the loot. When Alex and Juliet go on a spending spree, and the flat below is broken into (resulting in a visit from the police), David's forebodings deepen; he moves into the attic and starts making preparations. Goth and Andy show up and attack Juliet and Alex, but David lures them into the attic and kills them. Their bodies are disposed of like Hugo's.

By drilling spy-holes in the attic floor, David keeps track of the others' movements. Having bought herself a ticket to Rio, Juliet becomes David's lover, arousing Alex's jealousy. The three bodies are unearthed, and Alex's editor sends him to cover the story. Alarmed by David's increasingly wayward behaviour, Alex starts to phone the police but is forestalled by David, who prepares to make off with the money. A savage three-way fight ends in the kitchen with Alex stabbed through the shoulder by David, and David stabbed to death by Juliet. Juliet hammers the knife deeper into Alex, pinning him to the floor, before leaving with the suitcase – but on reaching the airport finds only torn-up newspaper. As the police arrive at the flat, Alex lies in a pool of blood, which drips slowly through the floorboards on to the money he had hidden there.

Anyone who feared the British cinema was becoming mired in tasteful period adaptations and the twitteries of the idle rich should take heart from *Shallow Grave*, a black comedy as witty, stylish and cruel as anything from John Dahl or the Coen brothers. Right from the opening, as David's Sunset Boulevard-style posthumous voice-over gives way to a headlong skelter through the cobbled streets of Edinburgh New Town, the film fizzles with the exuberance of its own ruthless energy. This, you sense, is a movie that will take no hostages.

At this year's Dinard Festival, *Shallow Grave* picked up a brace of 'Hitchcock' awards (best film and best acting). It's an apt linkage – not for suspense, which the film scarcely deals in, but for the way it relishes the ghoulish details of death and dismemberment. The sound of a saw rasping on human wrist-bone comes over with scalp- ▶



◀ crawling immediacy, and the unwieldiness of manoeuvring a dead body downstairs has rarely been more graphic. The mayhem is all the more telling – and all the funnier – for taking place in the Georgian elegance of the shared apartment. The set, based on a real flat, was constructed slightly larger than life-size, giving a pervasive sense of distortion – an impression aided by the subtly heightened lighting and colour scheme. When the trio discover Hugo's dead body, he lies naked and face upward, limbs asprawl, against a blood-red blanket on a royal-blue background – an opulent and disquietingly beautiful image

Disquieting images, in fact, abound throughout the film. During Hugo's interrogation by the flatmates we get abrupt flashes (back? forward?) to a violent robbery at a cashpoint machine, all the more ominous for being shot from behind the machine's screen, as though being monitored by some cyborg crime-boss. And after David has drilled his multiple spyholes in the attic floor, the shafts of light streaming from below at various angles weirdly suggest a wartime city, blacked-out except for searchlights fingering the sky. Even in its quieter moments *Shallow Grave* never relaxes, maintaining with its quirky visual texture and taut editing a mood of steadily encroaching menace.

But the core of the action, the three-stroke motor that powers it on its inexorable route to catastrophe, is the relationship of the three main characters, the attractions, tensions and shifting emotional patterns between them. Within their luxurious, hermetically-sealed living-space (no visitors, no phone calls accepted), they play out their roles. At first Alex is the king, David the butt, with Juliet lazily aware of both men's unstated desire for her. As the crisis deepens, everything swivels: David discovers in himself a capacity for violence and takes up superego, god's-eye status, scuttling from spyhole to spyhole in his attic like a low-tech Dr Mabuse. Juliet gravitates to where the power is, and unexpectedly it's smartarse Alex who ends up with our sympathy. (Not least of the film's assets is demonstration-quality ensemble playing from Kerry Fox, Christopher Eccleston and Ewan McGregor.)

To claim *Shallow Grave* as a British film would be misleading. It's very much a Scottish film in its dry, razor-edged humour and its knack of cutting straight to the narrative quick: we never learn just how the heavies trace Hugo, and who cares anyway? True, occasional plot twists are strictly from stock (cash switched for newspaper), as are some of the characters, notably Ken Stott's quizzical police inspector. But as the first feature of its director, producer and writer it's an impressively assured achievement – hard, fast and wickedly enjoyable. If they continue in this vein, connoisseurs of black comedy should have cause to celebrate.

**Philip Kemp**

## The Specialist

USA 1994

Director: Luis Llosa

### Certificate

15  
**Distributor**  
Warner Bros.  
**Production Company**  
Warner Bros.  
**Executive Producers**  
Steve Baron  
Jeff Most  
Chuck Binder  
**Producer**  
Jerry Weintraub  
**Co-producer**  
R.J. Louis  
**Associate Producers**  
Tony Munafò  
Susan Ekins  
**Production Associate**  
Marshall J. Nord  
**Production Supervisor**  
Fred Fontana  
**Unit Production Manager**  
R.J. Louis  
**Location Manager**  
Maria Chavez  
**2nd Unit Director**  
Allan Graf  
**Assistant Directors**  
Dennis Maguire  
John Gallagher  
Joe Lotito  
**Casting**  
Jackie Burch  
**Screenplay**  
Alexandra Seros  
Based on *The Specialist* novels by John Shirley  
**Script Supervisor**  
Joanne Small  
**Director of Photography**  
Jeffrey L. Kimball  
**2nd Unit Director of Photography**  
Michael O'Shea  
**Camera Operators**  
Greg Lundsgaard  
Michael Scott  
**Computer Graphics**  
Brian Callier  
**Editor**  
Jack Hofstra  
**Production Designer**  
Walter P. Martishius  
**Art Director**  
Alan Muraoka  
**Set Decorator**  
Scott Jacobson  
**Special Effects Supervisor**  
Hans Metz  
**Special Effects Co-ordinator**  
Clay Pinney  
**Special Effects**  
Mike Edmonson  
Bill Harrison  
Steve Riley  
Al Broussard  
Richard Scioli  
Donald Connor  
Ken Gorrell  
**Costume Design**  
Judiana Makovsky  
**Costume Supervisors**  
Carole Brown-James  
Kent James  
**Make-up/Special Make-up Effects**  
Steve La Porte  
**Make-up Artists**  
Scott Eddo  
Tricia Sawyer  
**Key Hairstylist**  
Peggy Semtob  
**Title Design**  
Nina Saxon Film Design  
**Titles/Opticals**  
Pacific Title  
Art Studios  
**Music/Music Conductor**  
John Barry  
**Orchestrations**  
Greig McRitchie  
**Music Supervisor**  
Emilio Estefan Jnr  
**Music Editor**  
Clif Kohlweck

### Songs/Music Extracts

"Slip Away" by Lawrence P. Dermer, "Shower Me With Love" by Lawrence P. Dermer, Jon Secada, performed by LaGaylia Frazier; "Mental Picture" by Jon Secada, Miguel Morejon, performed by Jon Secada; "El Baile de al vela" by Juanito R. Marquez, performed by Cheito Quinonez; "El Duro soy yo" by Demetrio Tatis, performed by Tony Tatis y su Merengue Sound; "Love is the Thing" by Lawrence P. Dermer, "Real" by Jon Secada, Diane Warren, performed by Donna Allen; "Que Manera de quererte" by Luis Rios, performed by Albita Rodriguez; "Turn the Beat Around" by Peter Jackson, Gerald Jackson, performed by Gloria Estefan; "All Because of You" by Hector Garrido, "Jambala" by Emilio Estefan Jnr, Jorge Casas, Clay Ostwald, performed by MSM (Miami Sound Machine); "El Amor" by F. "Stefano" Salgado, Kike Santander, performed by Azucar Moreno  
**Choreography**  
Pedro Pablo Pena  
Dancers:  
Miami Hispanic Ballet  
**Supervising Sound Editor**  
Mark Stoelckinger  
**Dialogue Editors**  
Dan Hegeman  
Paul Carden  
Frank Smathers  
**ADR Supervisor**  
Bill Voigtlander  
**ADR Editors**  
Barbara Boguski  
Zack Davis  
**Foley Editors**  
David Moritz  
Julie Feiner  
Nancy Tracy  
**Production Sound Mixer**  
Andy Wiskes  
**Music Mixer**  
Shawn Murphy  
**ADR Mixer**  
Thomas J. O'Connell  
**Foley Mixer**  
Eric Gotthelf  
**Sound Re-recorders**  
John Reitz  
Dave Campbell  
Gregg Rudloff  
**Sound Effects Editors**  
Glenn T. Morgan  
Chris Sheldon  
Mark Gordon  
Brian McPherson  
Peter J. Lehman  
**Foley Artists**  
Kevin Bartnof  
Katie Rowe  
**Stunt Co-ordinator**  
Allan Graf  
**Marine Co-ordinator**  
Ricou Browning  
**Cast**  
**Sylvester Stallone**  
Ray Quick  
**Sharon Stone**  
May Munro  
**James Woods**  
Ned Trent  
**Rod Steiger**  
Joel Leon

**Eric Roberts**  
Tomas Leon  
**Mario Ernesto Sanchez**  
Charlie  
**Sergio Dore, Jnr**  
Strongarm  
**Chase Randolph**  
May's Dad  
**Jeana Bell**  
May's Mom  
**Britanny Paige Bouck**  
Young May  
**Emilio Estefan Jnr**  
Piano Player  
**LaGaylia Frazier**  
Singer  
**Ramon Gonzalez-Cuevas**  
Priest at Cemetery  
**Tony Munafò**  
Tony  
**Cheito Quinonez**  
Singer at Party  
**Tony Tatis**  
Backup Singer  
**Mercedes Enriquez**  
Pregnant Woman on Bus  
**Yennifer Behrens**  
Schoolgirl on Bus  
**Scott Blake**  
**Rex Reddick**  
**Jeff Bornstein**  
Punks  
**Allan Graf**  
Bus Driver  
**Juan Cejus**  
Latin Thug  
**Marcela Cardona**  
Tina  
**Brent Sexton**  
Manny  
**Yami Hildalgo**  
Hooker  
**Alfredo Alvarez-Calderon**  
Bomb Expert

**Steve Raulerson**  
Chief of Police  
**Dave Caprita**  
OPS Buddy  
**Mayte Vilan**  
Ordinance Expert  
**Bud Ekins**  
Veteran Cop  
**John Archie**  
**Carmen More**  
Cops  
**Frank A. DeVito III**  
Young Squad Expert  
**Bobbi Evors**  
Woman at Poker Game  
**Jon Brent Curry**  
Parking Attendant  
**Chris Conrad**  
Officer  
**Anabel Gracia**  
Young Girl at Funeral  
**Guillermo Gentile**  
Priest  
**Ashley Winston Nolan**  
Hotel Clerk  
**Victoria Bass**  
Socialite  
**Mario Roberts**  
**Jeff Moldovan**  
**Gene Hartine**  
Kitchen Thugs  
**Antoni Corone**  
Marksman  
**Steve Gladstone**  
Teckie  
**Jackie Davis**  
Grocery Store Owner  
**Elvis the Cat**  
Timer

9,877 feet  
110 minutes

Dolby stereo  
In colour  
Technicolor

a waterfront compound rigged to explode if it is penetrated, Quick vacillates. He finally agrees to help only after Munro – who's positioned herself as girlfriend of the drug lord's son – vows to do it herself. Soon we realise that Trent, who is now in the pay of the drug lord, has set Munro to ferret out Quick. Trent can use his employer's resources to eliminate Quick, as soon as he begins offing the drug lord's men.

Munro and Quick make love, and this apparently muddies Munro's resolve. She then seems to have been caught in one of Quick's explosions – she wasn't, and she uses her apparent death to break her connection to both Trent and the drug lord's son. Quick meets her surreptitiously, but the two are cornered in a hotel room by Trent and his men. Quick escapes (he rigs a series of explosions that dumps the whole hotel suite into the ocean), and Munro is used by Trent as bait to get Quick out into the open again. They escape yet again, leading Trent to Quick's dockyard compound, where everything explodes. Eventually, Quick offs Trent and the two lovers drive off together.

● Quentin Tarantino is right – we love pulp, the crustier and sillier the better. Pulp is by definition yesterday's trash, garnished with nostalgic kitsch. Contemporary B-movies and fiction won't be real pulp until decades hence, and Tarantino's *Pulp Fiction* is too knowing to be mistaken for the real thing. True pulp is most often badly conceived, crudely executed and has little to recommend it beyond the allure of juvenile lust and the smell of ripe cheese. It brings us down a peg or two, it throws raw porterhouse into our inner psychopath's rusty cage, and best of all, it never minds if we don't think very highly of it. Like a cheap whore, it prefers that we simply do our

● Ray Quick and Ned Trent are US demolition experts assigned to assassinate a South American drugs bigwig by blowing up a bridge as he drives over it. When the approaching vehicle is acknowledged to contain children, Quick tries to stop the explosion. Trent prevents him. After the explosion, they are permanently estranged.

Years later, Quick is repeatedly asked by May Munro over the phone to help her kill a Cuban drug lord who murdered her father. Living in seclusion, in



Not with a bang: Sylvester Stallone, Sharon Stone



dirty business and be on our way.

More than any other recent film *The Specialist* deserves the title *Pulp Fiction*. Sloppy, adolescent and proud of it, the movie rarely tries to be witty, and never important. It seems allergic to narrative logic as we've come to know it in Hollywood films. Based on John Shirley's series of paperback thrillers – which are pulp by now – *The Specialist* is all attitude, nudity and pyrotechnics, with acting that stretches from somnambulism to eye-popping grand mal. But the film's connection with its source material is vital. It places what might otherwise be yet another action film in a context that glories in its own triviality. Like many films based on comics, *The Specialist* is borne from the baby-boomer childhood of the 70s – it's a movie for the kids we were when there seemed to be nothing but time to ponder the equities of superheroes, breakfast cereal, Bugs Bunny quips, old horror movies and board games. Like most Hollywood movies, it's of a specific time and place, and if you cannot connect with the cultural circuits it pulses along – if you've never read a *Specialist* or *Executioner* or *Doc Savage* paperback – then you're unlikely to recognise the film's Ghost of Trash Culture Past.

All the same, perhaps the more enlightened reading of director Llosa's first shot at the big time (he'd previously directed *Sniper*) would be as blinkered, time-wasting idiocy. It is poorly-judged, thoughtless and often boring. Even the languorous sex scenes garner unintentional laughs. The average audience's primary concern will be for Sly's ageing physique; the veins bulge so alarmingly on his shoulders and neck we begin to imagine eventual Cronenbergian implosions. At the very least, a loved one should tell him to ease off with the free weights.

But there's a great deal of pulpy pleasure to be had. There's oodles of 70s Latin disco offsetting the laconic 90s baloney. In one scene in the back of a hushed church, Stallone hikes up Stone's skirt and discovers a gun in her garter. In another, a waterfront explosion results in a rain of flaming crabs. As sweaty drug lord Joe Leon, Rod Steiger uses a preposterous Cuban accent like a small gauge shotgun, while Eric Roberts seethes lisply as his son. Still, the real star of the movie is Woods, who has returned to portraying weasels after an inexplicable day-trip as leading man. Nobody can exude wormy, dead-eyed rage like Woods, and in scene after scene he takes wolf-sized bites out of an otherwise mundane action scenario.

*The Specialist* is indeed a movie of junky incidental treats. The bulk of it is enervating – Stallone has become an anti-actor, while Stone fleshes out a role that is tellingly reminiscent of the vapid blonde sluts she played before *Basic Instinct*. As Hollywood product, Llosa's movie is a botch, but as an artefact of our pulpier urges, a high-rent condo bursting with cheap cultural effluvia, it is sometimes sublime.

Michael Atkinson

## Timecop

USA 1994

Director: Peter Hyams

### Certificate

18

### Distributor

UIP

### Production Company

Largo  
International N.V.  
In association with  
JVC Entertainment  
present a  
Signature/Renaissance/  
Dark Horse Production

### Executive Producer

Mike Richardson

### Producers

Moshe Diamant  
Sam Raimi  
Robert Tapert

### Co-producers

Todd Moyer  
Marilyn Vance

### Line Producer

David A. Shepherd

### Associate Producers

Mark Scon  
Richard G. Murphy

### Production Co-ordinator

Linda Sheehy-

Brownstein

### Location Manager

Rino Pace

### Assistant Directors

Morgan James Beggs

Ella Kutschera

### Casting

Penny Perry

Voice Casting:

Barbara Harris

### Screenplay

Mark Verheiden

Story by Mike

Richardson and

Mark Verheiden

Based on the comic

series created by

Mike Richardson and

Mark Verheiden

### Dialogue

Glenn T. Morgan

### Script Supervisor

Christine Wilson

### Director of Photography

Peter Hyams

### Camera Operators

Wayne MacConnell

Attila Szalay

Christopher Tammaro

### Steadicam Operator

Stephen Campanelli

### Visual Effects

VIFX

Rhonda C. Gunner

Richard E. Hollander

Gregory L. McMurry

John C. Wash

Supervisor:

Gregory L. McMurry

Digital Supervisor:

John Des Jardin

VIFX Crew:

Carol Ashley

Cheryl Lynn Budgett

Sara DeCesare

Tony Dongles Diep

Gus Duron

Antoine Durr

Giancarlo Ganziano

Scott Giegler

Francine 'Freddi'

Gitelman

Brian Hirota

Eric Jennings

Andy Kopra

Greg Kozikowski

Harry Lam

Zeke Morales

Rick Newsom

Mike Norville

Todd Outten

Jerry Pao

Scott Peterson

Thom Randmaa

Cliff Richardson

Ha Ngan Roda

Tom Shaughnessy

Kathi Spencer

David Stump

Alison Yerxa

One Danny Yoon

### Editor

Steven Kemper

Associate Editor

Jeff Gullo

### Production Designer

Philip Harrison

### Visual Consultant

Syd Mead

### Art Director

Richard Hudolin

### Set Design

Bjorn Ollner

### Set Decorators

Rose Marie McSherry

Ann Marie Corbett

### Set Dressers

Brent Bennett

Gordon Clapp

Glenn MacDonald

Peter Stoffels

### Scenic Artist

Barry Kootchin

### Picture Car Sculptures

Roderick Quin

### Special Effects

### Co-ordinator

John Thomas

### Special Effects

Woody Lawhon

Don B. Leask

Clay Scheirer

Joel Schist

Michael Steffe

Tim Storvik

### Costume Design

Dan Lester

Canadian Costume

Design:

Karen L. Matthews

Costume Supervisor

Debbie Douglas

### Make-up

Zoltan Elek

Margaret Solomon

### Hairstylists

Janice R. Alexander

Julie McHaffie

### Title Design

Nina Saxon

### Titles/Opticals

Cinema Research

Corporation

### Music

Mark Isham

### Music Conductor

Ken Kugler

### Orchestrations

Ken Kugler

Dell Hake

### Music Supervisor

Karyn Rachtman

### Music Editor

Tom Carlson

### Songs/Music Extracts

"Does Anybody Really

Know What Time It Is?"

by Robert Lamm,

performed by Greg

O'Connor; "Let's

Misbehave" by Cole

Porter, performed

by Irving Aaronson and

His Commanders;

"Sleazebucket Pull"

by John Sidel, John

Loggia, performed by

Fudge Factory Inc.;

"Time Won't Let Me"

by Chet Kelly, Tom

King, performed by

The Smithereens

### Supervising Sound Editor

Bruce Richardson

### Sound Editors

Neal J. Anderson

Bob Behr

Ed Callahan

Laura Harris

Amy Hoffberg

Tony Miceli

Mark Ormandy

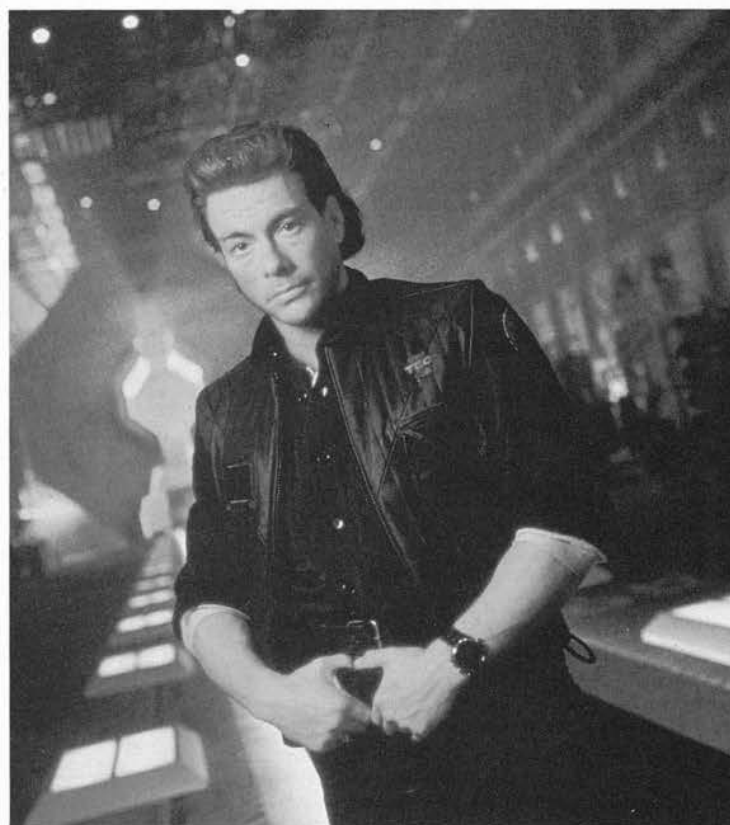
Patrick Sellers

Pamela J. Yuen

### ADR Editors

Constance A. Kazmer

Jeff Watts



Partial recall: Jean-Claude Van Damme

### Foley Mixer

Dean Drabin

### Sound Mixer

Eric Batut

### Sound Recordists

Gary Ritchie

Kathy McCart

### Re-recording Mixers

Donald O. Mitchell

Michael Herbeck

Frank A. Montano

### Sound Effects Design

Joseph K. Phillips

Brian McPherson

### Foley Artists

Robin Harlan

Sarah Monat

### Stunt Co-ordinator

Glenn Randall

### Cast

Jean-Claude Van Damme

Max Walker

Mia Sara

Melissa Walker

Ron Silver

McComb

Bruce McGill

Matuzak

Gloria Reuben

Fielding

Scott Bellis

Ricky

Jason Schombing

Atwood

Scott Lawrence

Spota

Kenneth Welsh

Uitley

Brent Woolsey

Shotgun

Brad Loree

Reyes

Shane Kelly

Rollerblades

Richard Faraci

Cole

Steve Lambert

Lansing

Kevin McNulty

Parker

J.J. Makaro

Yves Cameron

McComb Guards

David Jacob Jnr

Mike Mitchell

McComb Men

Jacob Rupp

Palmer

Sean O'Byrne

Aide Lawrence

### Gabrielle Rose

Judge Marshall

Malcolm Stewart

Nelson

Alfonso Quijada

Photographer

Yvette Ferguson

Atwood Secretary

Glen Roald

Doorman

Theodore Thomas

Pete

Lon Katzmann

Handlebar

Duncan Fraser

Irish Cop

Tony Morelli

Tweed

Nick Hyams

Newsboy

Kelli Fox

Aide

Pamela Martin

TV Commentator

Tom McBeath

T.E.C. Technician

Frank Cassini



◀ team. McComb is on the point of killing Melissa when his younger self, called by Walker, arrives. Walker pushes the two McCombs together and a time paradox kills the Senator. Returning to 2004, Walker finds Matuzak still running the TEC and discovers that, in this time line, Melissa has survived and they have a son.

● Peter Hyams, whose science fiction-fantasy-action career ranges from the amiably professional (*Capricorn One*, *Running Scared*) to the frankly mediocre (*Stay Tuned*, 2010), handles *Timecop* with exactly the expected ordinary skill. He never treats star Jean-Claude Van Damme to the kind of semi-mythic treatment given him by John Woo in *Hard Target*, though he does allow for specifically Jean-Claude bits of business, such as doing a mid-air splits in the kitchen to avoid being electrocuted. With a blithely paradox-heavy time travel scenario, nipping at the heels of the *Terminators* and the *Back to the Futures*, this is exactly the sort of film you would expect to be cooked up by a comic book company eager to expand into features.

Once the premise is established, it is assumed the US government can be trusted – leaving aside the power-crazy interventions of a rogue senator – to preserve the integrity of history, which is to say that their policing of the past serves to uphold America's global preeminence. It is wrong for McComb to give his younger self stock market tips, but the prohibition on tampering with the past only notionally extends to preventing Walker from saving his murdered wife.

In a typical bit of have-it-all plotting, the finale has the hero returned to his present to find all the likeable characters who have been killed returned to life with no memory of the threat posed by the vanished McComb. Completely unstressed is the fact that Walker returns to a son whose name he doesn't know, presumably cancelling out an unseen incarnation of himself who has lived through ten happy years with Melissa.

While its time-twisting is on a superficial, though highly engaging, TV movie level (it's a lot less satisfying than the made-for-cable *Timescape*), *Timecop* is a worthy entry in the post-modern action movie mode lately typified by *Demolition Man*. It is so confident of its conventions that it can spring surprises: Fielding, a young black woman with attitude, is so clearly in the spirit of the feisty ethnic partners Arnie is often given that it is a genuine shock that she turns out, albeit shakily, to be a wrong 'un. And there is a 'Scenes We'd Like to See' moment, when Walker thinks of the appropriate witticism ("Freeze") a scene after he has despatched a vile baddie by icing his arm and breaking him apart, with a far less satisfying one-liner. Effects-wise, the movie is nothing new, though the paradox-driven disposal of the villain is suitably gruesome in a fairly fresh manner.

Kim Newman

## Trial By Jury

USA 1994

Director: Heywood Gould

### Certificate

15

### Distributor

Warner Bros

### Production Company

Morgan Creek

### Executive Producer

Gary Barber

### Producers

James G. Robinson

Chris Meledandri

Mark Gordon

### Line Producer

Michael MacDonald

### Production Supervisor

Todd P. Smith

### Supervising Production

Co-ordinator

Louise Rosner

### Production Co-ordinator

Mandy Spencer-Phillips

New York:

Elizabeth J. Nevin

### Unit Production Manager

Michael MacDonald

New York:

Charles Miller

### Location Manager

Anne Richardson

New York:

Charles M. Lum

### Post-production Supervisor

Jody Levin

### Assistant Directors

Albert Shapiro

Tom Quinn

Megan Banning

Eric S. Potechin

New York:

Glen Trotiner

Dean Garvin

### Casting

Heidi Levitt

Toronto:

Karen Hazzard

New York:

Bernie Telsey

W.D. Cantler

Martha Brophy

### Screenplay

Jordan Katz

Heywood Gould

### Script Supervisor

Susanna David

### Director of Photography

Frederick Elmes

### Camera Operator

Ken Withers

B Camera:

Matt Tundo

New York:

Bruce MacCallum

### Editor

Joel Goodman

### Production Designer

David Chapman

### Art Director

Barbra Matis

### Set Decorator

Steve Shewchuk

### Set Dressers

Bill Johnson

Ken Clark

New York:

Anthony Baldasare

### Scenic Artist

Reet Phum

### Wardrobe Supervisor

Arthur Rowsell

New York:

Jane Myers

### Make-up

Katherine James

Patricia Green

New York:

Allen Weisinger

### Hairstylists

Gina Monaci

Sugar Blymyer

Jennifer Bower

O'Halloren

New York:

Joe Coscia

### Titles/Opticals

Pacific Title

### Music

Terence Blanchard

### Music Performed by

Terence Blanchard

### Quartet:

Terence Blanchard

Chris Thomas

Bruce Barth

Troy Davis

### Orchestrations

Eddie Kane

### Music Editor

Thomas Milano

### Songs/Music Extracts

"All the Way" by

Sammy Cahn, Jimmy

Van Heusen;

"Everybody Loves

Somebody" by Irving

Taylor, Ken Lane

### Supervising Sound Editor

Michael Hilkene

### Dialogue Editors

Gaston Biraben

John O. Wilde

### ADR Editor

Robert Fitzgerald

### Sound Mixer

Bill Daly

### ADR Mixers

Jeff Courtie

Paul Zydel

### Re-recording Mixers

Steve Pederson

Scott Millan

Larry Stensvold

### Electronic Sound

Effects Editors

Eric Lindemann

Odin Benitez

### Foley Artists

Joan Rowe

Catherine Rowe

### Stunt Co-ordinators

Toronto:

Branko Racki

New York:

Peter Buccosi

### Animal Trainer

Susan Parker

### Cast

Joanne Whalley-Kilmer

Valerie

Armand Assante

Rusty Pirone

Gabriel Byrne

Daniel Graham

William Hurt

Tommy Vesey

Kathleen Quinlan

Wanda

Margaret Whitton

Jane Lyle

Ed Lauter

John Boyle

Richard Portnow

Leo Greco

Lisa Arrindell Anderson

Eleanor Lyons

Jack Gwaltney

Teddy

Graham Jarvis

Mr Duffy

William R. Moses

Paul Baker

Joe Santos

Johnny Verona

Beau Starr

Phillie

Bryan Shilowich

Robbie

Stuart Whitman

Emmett

Kevin Ramsey

Edmund

Fiona Gallagher

Camille

Kay Hawtrey

Clara

Ardon Bess

Albert

Karina Arroyave

Mercedes

Andrew Sabiston

Elliot

Paul Soles

Mr Kriegsberg

Jovanni Sy

Louis

### Damon d'Oliveira

Rafael

Andrew Miller

Krasny

Richard Fitzpatrick

Balsam

Robert Breuler

Judge Feld

Ron Hale

Bailiff

Sandi Ross

Court Officer

William Duell

Jimmy

John Capodice

Limp Demarco

Andrew Lewarne

Petrie

David Eisner

Melman

Tanja Jacobs

Susan Fine

Diego Fuentes

Tony Meyler

Scott Wickware

Johnie Chase

Cops

Gene Mack

House Detective

Susan Jay

Sookie

### Elena Kudaba

Elena

Gord Welke

Hansen

Stan Coles

Detective Gray

Mike Starr

Hughie Bonner

William Corno

Associate

David Cronenberg

Director

Fleure Presner

Supermodel

Junior Williams

Waiter

Chris Gibson

Hang Out Waiter

Rick Meilleur

Reporter

Wray Downs

Gene Dinovi

Pianists

9,604 feet

107 minutes

Dolby stereo

In colour

● Valerie, a young divorcee, runs an antique clothing shop in New York. An idealist, she believes in truth, justice and doing her civic duty, and attempts to convey this to her seven-year-old son. Valerie is called for jury service on the trial of mob boss Rusty Pirone, who is accused of the brutal murder of 11 people. As the case goes to trial, the prosecution's star witness is murdered. US attorney Daniel Graham knows he must go to trial with little more than circumstantial evidence against the mobster, yet he is certain the jury believes Pirone to be guilty.

Valerie soon finds herself manipulated by ex-cop Tommy Vesey, who is on Pirone's payroll. Threatening to harm Valerie's son, he coerces her into voting for Pirone's acquittal. Then Pirone visits Valerie's bedroom, where he terrorises her. With her idealism stripped from her, Valerie only wants to survive, and so convinces enough jury members to vote for Pirone's acquittal. Pirone is set free. Believing Valerie will eventually turn him in, he orders her death. After being abducted, Valerie is rescued by Vesey, who is killed in the process. Before he dies, Vesey tells Valerie to settle with Pirone. She visits Pirone and kills him with an ice pick.

● Juggling its themes of crime, corruption and identity, *Trial By Jury* is uncertain whether it wants to be a courtroom drama, social commentary or film noir. In the opening scene, a prostitute kills a star witness by sticking an ice pick in his neck, and quips, "Who says acupuncture doesn't work?" Meanwhile, Valerie, about to report for jury service, accompanies her son to school. "But why do we have juries?" he asks. "In case the police make mistakes," she answers, not yet realising that juries need policing as much as the police need juries. In court, neither the prosecution nor the defence can believe their luck: the former have found an idealist in a world of cynics, while the latter believe she will succumb through sheer innocence to Pirone's old-fashioned Mafia charisma.

Corruption in *Trial By Jury* has become a national disease, already

affecting both ex-cop Vesey and state prosecutor Graham. Valerie soon joins their ranks. Doing Pirone's bidding among her fellow jurors, she flirts, cajoles and cites the constitution in his defence. The jurors later attest to her powers of persuasion. Some regard Valerie as an arch-manipulator; others see her simply as an independent woman with strong opinions. Only the prosecutor, Graham, noting various changes in her character, suspects Pirone's intervention.

Technically, *Trial By Jury* seldom exceeds the ordinary, moving between Valerie's apartment with its 50s vintage decor; a well-lit courtroom; the dingy bar inhabited by Pirone's friends; and daylight shots in Central Park, and in rural New York, where Valerie's father innocently resides. Reining in on the barflies, the camera reserves its wider angles for the courtroom. As in De Palma's *The Bonfire of the Vanities*, there is a feeling of courtroom spaciousness as the camera shifts its point of view and settles on specific characters and objects: a spectator sleeps while Valerie is interviewed as a prospective juror; while, as though emphasising Pirone's out-of-date criminality, a court reporter types on a lap-top computer.

Although the film falls back on a number of courtroom clichés, *Trial By Jury*'s failure cannot be attributed to its actors. Joanne Whalley-Kilmer, wide-eyed and class-ridden, Gabriel Byrne with his mercenary charm, and William Hurt, his feeble working-class accent overshadowed by a convincing sense of despair, perform competently; while Armand Assante, in *Mambo Kings* mode, is typecast with minimal damage. But the film lacks the camera work and directorial panache to negotiate the claustrophobic space it inhabits. Had it remained in the courtroom, it might have been able to concentrate on the legal system as a metaphor for the disintegration of American values. But director Heywood Gould, also a writer of crime fiction, is lured into the subtleties of Valerie's guilt, for she as much on trial as Pirone.



# Vanya on 42nd Street

USA 1994

Director: Louis Malle

## Certificate

U  
Distributor  
Artificial Eye  
Production Company  
Laura Pels Productions  
Mayfair Entertainment  
In association with  
Channel 4 Films

## Producer

Fred Berner  
Associate Producer  
Alyse Bezahlter  
Celeste Bartos  
Beverly Karp  
Production Co-ordinator  
Livia Perez-Borrero

## Post-production Supervisor

Becky Browder

## Assistant Director

Gary Marcus

## Screenplay

David Mamet

Based on Anton

Chekhov's play

## Script Supervisor

France La Chapelle

## Theatre Director

André Gregory

## Stage Manager

Liz Sherman

## Director of Photography

Declan Quinn

## Editor

Nancy Baker

## Production Designer

Eugene Lee

## Design Supervisor

Daniele Perna

## Set Decorator

Randi Savoy

## Costume Design

Gary Jones

## Wardrobe Supervisor

Donna Maloney

## Make-up

Sharon Ilson

## Hairstylist

Mel McKinney

## Titles/Opticals

REI Media Group

## Music

Joshua Redman

## Music Performed by

Joshua Redman

Quartet

Saxophone:

Joshua Redman

Piano:

Brad Mehldau

Bass:

Christian McBride

Drums:

Brian Blade

## Music Producer

Matt Pierson

## Supervising Sound Editor

Ron Bochar

## Dialogue Editor

Philip Stockton

## Foley Editor

Bruce Pross

## Sound Recordist

Joel Holland

## Sound Mixer

Tod A. Maitland

Dolby stereo

consultant:

Robert S. Warren

## Re-recording Mixer

Reilly Steele

## Cast

Wallace Shawn

Vanya

Julianne Moore

Yelena

André Gregory

Himself

George Gaynes

Serebryakov

Brooke Smith

Sonya

Larry Pine

Dr Astrov

Phoebe Brand

Nanny

Lynn Cohen

Maman

Jerry Mayer

Waffles

Madhur Jaffrey

Mrs Chao

10.810 feet

120 minutes

Dolby stereo

In colour



A nest of gentlefolk: Julianne Moore

bored, with whom Vanya has fallen hopelessly in love. More interested in Astrov, whose main pursuits appear to be vodka and forestry, Yelena irritably brushes off Vanya's approaches.

Marking the end of the first act, Gregory moves his guests to another stage area where the play resumes. During a night heavy with an approaching storm, the members of Serebryakov's household discuss their lives. The Professor is petulant with gout and Yelena tries to comfort him; Astrov has been summoned, but the Professor refuses to see him, much to the indignation of Sonya, the young daughter by his first marriage. Vanya and Astrov drink copiously, and Sonya encourages the doctor to talk about himself until the storm has passed and he departs. Sonya and Yelena, previously uncomfortable with each other, clear the air in reconciliation; Yelena admits to profound unhappiness, while Sonya confides she is in love with Astrov. Actors and audience then mingle for a buffet lunch.

The next act, Gregory explains, takes place three months later. Doggedly maintaining his infatuation with Yelena, Vanya goes to pick some autumn roses for her. When Sonya sadly remarks that Astrov doesn't seem to notice her, Yelena agrees to find out just how he feels about her step-daughter. It is quickly evident, however, that Astrov is fascinated not by Sonya but by Yelena, and he is eagerly kissing her despite her protests, just as Vanya returns with the roses. Oblivious to the resulting tensions, the Professor announces to the entire family his intention to sell the estate.

When the mood is calmer, the Professor and his wife prepare to leave. Astrov and Sonya persuade Vanya to give up a bottle of morphine he has hidden away. Yelena admits to Astrov that he interested her and permits a farewell embrace. Amid mutual apologies with Vanya, who promises to manage the estate exactly as before, Serebryakov grandly sweeps Yelena away,

and Vanya and Sonya settle down to some overdue paperwork. Accepting a final vodka from Marina, Astrov also departs. Sonya consoles Vanya with her faith that eternal rest awaits them, and Gregory joins the cast around the worktable.

The phenomenon captured by *Vanya on 42nd Street*, thanks to the brooding environment of the New Amsterdam, once-glorious home to the Ziegfeld Follies, is one of transition. Monitored by André Gregory, smiling inscrutably over his worry-beads like a tribal guru, the unclothed players emerge and vanish among the theatre's ruined decor to share the exploration of a hypothetical present of no particular period or nationality. Their rehearsal is simply one of many, part of an unfinished history with - like the building that contains it - no final objective. Gregory's directorial function in this seems confined to marking out the acts, as if protecting his cast and their handful of spectators from total absorption.

If the production reflects any of his remaining influence on what the players have, over many months, developed from Chekhov for themselves, it is in his choice of background. Befitting its surroundings, this *Uncle Vanya* is a study of decay, the inevitability of which is recognised, briefly resisted, but finally accepted with stoical grace by a small band of penitents.

Since what we know of Gregory on film, given his career as an American theatre director, comes chiefly from *My Dinner with André*, it is tempting to link his version of Chekhov with the adventures he described in his earlier encounter with both Wallace Shawn and Louis Malle. Benignly whimsical, these journeys of self-discovery suggested a Gregory for whom communal activity is its own reward or punishment - for whom, in other words, the sociable process of rehearsal would always be preferable to a final perfor-

mance. This argument aside, with its rather tenuous evidence (although one might note with interest that *Uncle Vanya* was first planned by Chekhov with a co-writer, a team effort that quickly collapsed, and that he married one of the first actresses to play Yelena), there is no doubt that Malle has filmed Gregory's work with a clear respect for the original text.

The text is not, of course, what it was, given the many amendments undergone since the play's first short-lived appearance as *The Wood Demon*. David Mamet's translation, a force to be reckoned with like Michael Frayn's before him, disposes of the troublesome knocking Watchman and leaves Telegin to run all the errands as well as playing an essential (if muted) guitar, although the contentious 'Waffles' nickname has been reinstated. Where Frayn was unhappy about Serebryakov's plan to retire to Finland (actually within 20 miles of St. Petersburg, but how would a Western audience know?), Mamet retains the location without comment. Cutting around residual pomposity, he provides a flowing colloquialism, echoing the appealing rhythms and enhanced accuracy of his own plays. Among many enjoyable touches, Vanya describes Yelena as "a panorama of inaction", Yelena refers to Astrov as "an original", Marina observes, "We are all freeloaders under God", and Vanya mutters like a defeated salesman, "You don't know how hard this is for me". In its desperation, its subterfuges and its frailty, this is recognisably a Mamet *Vanya*.

As did Frayn, Mamet translates Sonya's concluding promise as "We will rest", confirming a reading of Chekhov as the champion not of lethargy but of hard work. Filming Sonya's outburst as the surprise it is, an unforeseen epilogue protesting a previously unremarked faith, Malle is consistent to what he has been able to bring to the play as film-maker: following several cues from Chekhov, it is a drama in which the characters learn to look at each other. Closely watched in turn by an unfidgiting camera, they gaze among themselves with a remarkable hunger, justifying the calculated pauses between Chekhov's speeches with an intensity that would surely be lost in conventional theatre. To this extent, the skill of Gregory's cast, with all its silences, has resulted in a triumph, dominated by the scrutiny, part-seductive, part-fearful, of Julianne Moore as the haunted Yelena. Although, in his one error, Malle allows her an unspoken soliloquy at odds with the rest of the piece, her function at the centre of his film transcends similar encounters with foolish old men in the likes of *Pretty Baby*, *Milou in May* and (as strikingly close precedents) *Atlantic City* and *Damage*. And if Shawn, spluttering on the edge of over-acting, is probably a touch too comical for Vanya's good, his predicament is at least no longer locked away on a remote Russian estate.

Philip Strick

Between 1969 and 1992, André Gregory directed rehearsals of Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya* at the disused Victory Theatre in New York, with audiences of not more than 30 sharing the stage with the actors. In April 1994, rehearsals resumed at the derelict New Amsterdam on 42nd Street in order for the production to be filmed by Louis Malle within a two-week schedule.

Converging from the 42nd Street crowds, actors and guests greet each other in the theatre's ruined auditorium. The opening lines of the play form a casual part of the conversation. Dr Astrov, on one of his visits to the neighbouring estate of Professor Serebryakov, chats with the family's old nursemaid Marina and with Vanya, the Professor's former brother-in-law, who has managed the estate for 25 years. Vanya reports that the Professor, now at retirement age, has returned to the estate to write an intended masterpiece that will crown his career as an academic. He is accompanied by his strikingly beautiful second wife, Yelena, loyal but increasingly listless and



# Wes Craven's New Nightmare

USA 1994

Director: Wes Craven

**Certificate**  
15

**Distributor**  
Rank

**Production Company**  
New Line Cinema

**Executive Producers**  
Robert Shaye  
Wes Craven

**Co-executive Producer**  
Sara Risher

**Producer**  
Marianne Maddalena

**Co-producer**  
Jay Rowe

**Associate Producer**  
Jeffrey Fenner

**Production Executive**  
Timothy Gray

**Production Supervisor**  
Eric McLeod

**Production Co-ordinators**  
Pearl Lucero  
Additional:  
Holly Hagy

**Unit Production Manager**  
Barry Waldman  
Additional:  
Leon Dudevoir

**Location Manager**  
Marshall Moore

**Executive in charge of Post-production**  
Joe Fineman

**Post-production Supervisor**  
Sara King

**2nd Unit Director**  
Mickey Gilbert

**Assistant Directors**  
Nick Mastrandrea  
Rosemary C. Cremona  
Jim Behnke  
Gary Marcus  
Robert Leveen

**Casting**  
Gary Zuckerbrod  
Associate:  
Jean Scoccimarro

**Screenplay**  
Wes Craven  
Based on characters created by Wes Craven

**Script Supervisors**  
Gretchen Oehler  
2nd Unit:  
Karolyn Austin

**Director of Photography**  
Mark Irwin

**2nd Unit Director of Photography**  
Eric Goldstein

**Camera Operators**  
Michael Endler  
Visual Effects:  
Dave Stump

**Steadicam Operators**  
David L. Peck  
Kirk Gardner

**Visual Effects**  
Flash Film Works  
Supervisor:  
William Mesa  
Producer:  
Nick Davis  
Co-Producer:  
Linda Landry-Nelson  
Technical Supervisor:  
John Coats  
Art Director:  
Charles Wood  
Production Manager:  
Tina Mesa

**Digital Visual Effects**  
Digital Filmworks

**Matte Painting/Composite Supervisor**  
Tim Donahue

**Editor**  
Patrick Lussier

**Production Designer**  
Cynthia Charette

**Art Directors**  
Troy Sizemore  
Diane McKinnon

**Set Design**  
Stephen Alesch

**Set Decorator**  
Ruby Guidara

**Set Dressers**  
Grant Scharbo  
Catherine Ernst

**Conceptual Artist**  
Matsune Suzuki

**Draughtsman**  
Charles J.H. Wood

**Scenic Artists**  
Linda Newman  
Martha Higgins  
Craig G. Shepherd  
Kiven Meyer  
Richard Brandt  
Leeza Ingalls  
Twyla Reppen  
Star Fritz  
James R. York  
Jon Higgins  
Linda Castren  
Daniel Beralas  
Additional:  
Linda Castren

**Storyboard Artist**  
Matt Golden

**Sculptures**  
Patrick Magin  
Katie Karloff

**Special Effects**  
Charles Schmitz  
Michael W. Menzel  
John C. Carlucci  
Morgan Guynes  
James Ochoa  
Jim Hannah  
Albert Marangoni  
Steven Carlton Ficke  
Adam Campbell  
Dwight Roberts  
Martin Simon  
Andre Ellingson

**2nd Unit:**  
Marty Bresin  
Mike Brown  
Scott Sand  
Don Hastings  
Jeff Bresin  
Steve King

**Mechanical Effects**  
Lou Carlucci

**Costume Design**  
Mary Jane Fort

**Wardrobe Supervisor**  
Jane Lanzner

**Make-up**  
Ashlee Peterson  
Freeway Unit:  
Kelvin R. Trahan

**Special Make-up Effects**  
Kurtzman, Nicotero & Berger  
EFX Group  
Robert Kurtzman  
Gregory Nicotero  
Howard Berger  
Co-ordinator:  
Erin Haggerty

**Freddy Krueger Make-up**  
David Miller Creations

**Hairstylists**  
Camille Henderson  
Freeway Unit:  
Kelvin R. Trahan

**Titles/Opticals**  
Howard Anderson Co.

**Music**  
J. Peter Robinson

**Music Conductor/Orchestrator**  
Michael McCuiston

**Music Supervisors**  
Paul di Franco  
Ed Gerrard

**Music Editor**  
Lise Richardson

**Songs/Music Extract**  
"Losing My Religion" by Bill Berry, Peter Buck, Mike Mills, Michael Stipe; "Chase's Blues" by J. Peter Robinson, Tom Canning, Mike Rockwell; "A Night-

mare on Elm Street" by Charles Bernstein

**Sound Design/Supervisor**  
Paul B. Clay

**Dialogue Editors**  
Jerry Jacobson  
Chris Rabideau  
Marty Stein

**ADR Editor**  
Patrick Somerset

**Sound Mixers**  
Jim Steube

**Music:**  
Robert Fernandez

**ADR/Foley Mixer**  
Karin Roulo

**ADR Recordist**  
Darrin Mann

**Sound Re-recordists**  
Peter Reale  
Roberta Doheny  
Tim Philben

**Sound Effects Editors**  
Susan Kurtz  
Patrick O'Sullivan  
Cindy Rabideau

**Foley Artists**  
Ellen Heuer  
Chris Montiana

**Walla Group**  
Studio City Players

**Stunt Co-ordinator**  
Tony Cecere

**Eel Wrangler**  
Sean Lally

**Cast**  
**Robert Englund**  
Himself/  
Freddy Krueger  
**Heather Langenkamp**  
John Saxon  
Wes Craven  
Marianne Maddalena  
Sam Rubin  
Sara Risher  
Robert Shaye  
Nick Corri  
Tuesday Knight  
Themselves  
Miko Hughes  
Dylan  
David Newsom  
Chase Porter  
Tracy Middendorf  
Julie  
Fran Bennett  
Dr Heffner

**Matt Winston**  
Chuck  
Rob LaBelle  
Terry  
Gretchen Oehler  
Script Supervisor  
Cully Fredricksen  
Limo Driver  
Bodhi Elfman  
TV Studio P.A.  
Claudia Haro  
New Line Receptionist  
Cindy Guidry  
Kim at New Line  
Ray Glatzmann  
Highway Patrolman  
Yonda Davis  
Highway Patrolwoman  
Michael Hagiwara  
Coroner  
W. Earl Brown  
Morgue Attendant  
Kenneth Zanchi  
Minister  
Beans Morocco  
Graveyard Worker  
Tamara Mark  
Patrice Englund  
Lin Shaye  
Nurse With Pills  
Deborah Zara Kobylt  
Newscaster  
Diane Madean  
Counter Nurse  
Star-Shemah  
Lou Thornton  
Cynthia Savage  
ICU Nurses  
Jessica Craven  
Junior Nurse  
With Needle  
Sandra Ellis Lafferty  
Senior Nurse  
With Needle  
Thomas G. Burt  
Security Officer  
Tina Vail  
Nurse Abbott  
Jeffrey John Davis  
Freddy's Hand Double

10,102 feet  
112 minutes

Dolby stereo  
In colour  
Foto-Kem Color  
Prints by  
Filmhouse



There'll always be an Englund: Miko Hughes (right)

● Ten years after starring in Wes Craven's *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, actress Heather Langenkamp is married to effects technician Chase and has a small son, Dylan. Troubled by bad dreams and a phone caller who sounds like Freddy Krueger of the *Elm Street* films, Heather is reunited on a talk show with Robert Englund, who played Freddy, then summoned to the offices of New Line Cinema. The company's chairman Robert Shaye offers her the lead role in a new film being written by Craven, which will bring back Freddy even though the monster was definitively killed in *Freddy's Dead: The Final Nightmare*. Craven explains that in this new script, he will reveal that Freddy is the manifestation of an ancient evil which has appeared throughout history and can only be bound when confined within a successful story, and that the cessation of the *Elm Street* series has loosed it on the real world.

Heather dreams that Chase is killed by Freddy and learns that her husband has been killed in an apparent car accident. At the funeral she is knocked out by a slight earth tremor and dreams that Freddy tries to drag Dylan into his underworld. Heather comes to believe

that Freddy is trying to make his way into the real world through Dylan, who sometimes acts as if possessed. Dylan is taken into hospital for tests, and a doctor, suspicious of Heather because she disapproves of horror films, guesses the child is suffering from sleep deprivation, having been kept awake by his irrational mother. While Heather protests, Dylan is sedated and falls under Freddy's power. Freddy kills Dylan's babysitter, and the boy escapes from the hospital. Heather appeals to actor friend John Saxon for help, but Saxon acts as if he were her father, the role he played in *A Nightmare on Elm Street*, and Heather finds herself on *Elm Street*. Venturing into the underworld, Heather faces Freddy and, with Dylan's help, defeats him. Craven's completed screenplay dispels Freddy from reality.

● This is a rare film, coming honestly by its possessive credit – even though its title sounds more like an ad line than something anyone would actually want to title a movie, *Wes Craven's New Nightmare* wins points for the most unique sequel premise in horror movie history. It opens with a reprise of the first sequence of *A Night-*

*mare on Elm Street*, as a clawed Freddy glove is meticulously assembled, then pulls a (not entirely unexpected) double reverse as the scene is revealed to be a) taking place on a film set, where effects men are labouring to create a remote-controlled killer glove; and b) a bad dream where that glove runs wild and kills a couple of minor characters. Later, of course, it is revealed that the people who die in Heather Langenkamp's dream have really been killed.

Playing at once to series fans and to the post-modern ironist in every multiplex, this *Nightmare* squirms remarkably around the supposedly definitive wrap-up of *Freddy's Dead*, pulling back into another plane of reality, where actors, directors and New Line execs play themselves. For those aware of the history between creator Wes Craven and New Line chairman Robert Shaye, there's another level of irony in Shaye's claim (scripted by Craven) that "Wes says he hasn't called me for ten years because he hasn't had any new nightmares". Craven, in a creditable performance, perceptibly chokes back glee when he suggests that Freddy has only been allowed to escape from the cage of *A Nightmare on Elm Street* because the



increasingly shoddy and jokey sequels have allowed him to manifest himself in a more streamlined and nasty form in the real world. There is a certain fudging in the exact status of Freddy, who is subtly and interestingly linked with such figures as the Witch in 'Hansel and Gretel' (Dylan insists on the importance of his mother reading all of the fairy tale's ending to restore the balance). It seems odd that Freddy should have more power to do evil if his popularity *decreases*, especially since Craven admits that the formless demon likes taking the Freddy shape, so it's hard to judge whether or not the Freddy of this film *wants* Craven to shoot his new script.

Also slightly limiting Craven's ambitions is the need to bring back the cast of the first film. While Langenkamp improves on her terrible performance in *A Nightmare on Elm Street, Part 3: Dream Warriors*, she still hasn't quite got the range to carry a whole movie. The always-welcome Saxon doesn't really differentiate between himself and his screen character, playing a scene as a concerned friend with just the measure of intensity he always brings. Robert Englund, slyly sending himself up as the ham actor, has to moderate his Freddy performance, but comes across as merely different rather than more scary. This Freddy, who memorably expands his mouth to fit Dylan's entire head into it, is certainly stronger stuff than anything seen in the franchise films, but doesn't come up to the benchmark figure of the first *Nightmare*. Though it taps into fascinating material (the Freddy back-story is potentially far more rewarding than the one in *Freddy's Dead*), this *Nightmare* could do with a longer view applied to the script, which might have explored the successive manifestations of the pre-Freddy monster.

The major achievement of the film, given the complicated mix of in-jokery and philosophy and the by-now familiar nature of Freddy's schtick, is that Craven manages to make things scary again. Reprising some of the business from *A Nightmare on Elm Street* (the phone sprouting a tongue, the teenager gutted in mid-air, the stairs that become a mire), Craven generally does it more creepily this time round, and, drawing a remarkable performance from child actor Miko Hughes, makes genuinely upsetting Freddy's attempts to destroy Dylan's mind. From unnerving touches like the earthquake which cracks the wall of Heather's house, mimicking the scratches of a Freddy glove, to major sequences like the sleepwalking child wandering into heavy freeway traffic, Craven is still one of the horror cinema's most imaginative creators of purely frightening moments. Dispensing with the adolescent concerns of the sequels, and ditching embarrassing frills like heavy metal music, feeble teen performances and bad one-liners, this is a worthy follow-up to the first film and a sly critique of all the water-ing-down that has happened since.

Kim Newman

## Yinshi Nan Nu (Eat Drink Man Woman)

Taiwan 1994

Director: Ang Lee

### Certificate

PG

### Distributor

Buena Vista

### Production Company

Central Motion

Pictures

In association with

Ang Lee productions

Good Machine

Executive Producer

Feng-Chyi Jiang

Producer

Li-Kong Hsu

Executive in charge

of Production

Hu-Ping Chung

Line Producer

Ta-Peng Lan

Associate Producers

Ted Hope

James Schamus

Production Co-ordinator

Ke-Chang Shih

Location Manager

Ta-Ching Yang

Post-production

Supervisors

Anthony Bregman

David Lee

Mary Jane Skalski

Assistant Directors

Yang-Sheng Ou

Lang-Tsung Yang

Screenplay

Ang Lee

Hui-Ling Wang

James Schamus

Script Supervisor

Michael Taylor

Director of Photography

Jong Lin

Opticals

Eastern Optical Effects

Editor

Tim Squyres

Production Designer

Fu-Hsiung Lee

Set Decorator

Hsi-Chien Lee

Costume Design

Wen-Chi Chen

Wardrobe Supervisor

Wen-Chi Chen

Make-up

Wei-Min Lee

Title Design

Steve Chang

Music

Mader

Associate Music Director

Sarah Plant

Music Performed by

Flutes:

Sarah Plant

Piano:

Hector Martignon

Sax/Clarinet:

Steve Elson

Cello:

Tomas Ulrich

Percussion:

Armando Sanchez

Louis F. Bouzo

Percussion/Bongo

Solos:

Joe Gonzalez Jr

Bass:

Mario Rodriguez

Trumpet:

Ramon (Chiripa)

Aracena

Erhu:

Wang Tien Jou

Sanxian:

Cao Ying Ying

Pipa/Ruan:

Wu Man

Keyboards/Marimba:

Mader

Voice:

Dina Emerson

### Music Arrangements

Mader

Mambo Tai Pei:

Sarah Plant

Guaracha:

Hector Martignon

Music Producer

Mader

Music Production

Co-ordinator

Jim Leavitt

Music Consultants

Susan Cheng

Wu Man

Songs/Music Extracts

C'est l'amour" by

Anthony Wong, Tak-

Choi Choi, Yiu-Fai

Chow, "Coffee House

Romance" by Anthony

Wong, Hiu-Yeung

Chung, "Love is Colder

Than Death" by

Anthony Wong, Tak-

Choi Choi, Yiu-Fai

Chow, performed by

Anthony Wong, "Gone

With the Wind" by

Hung-I Chang, Lur-

Rong Chen, "Wordless

Song" by Ta-Yo Lo,

"Look For a Star" by

Look For a Star, Daryl

Yau, performed by

Elizabeth Cheung,

Chen-Chia Cheng; "I Do

Love You" by Johnny

Chen, performed by

Hwa-Chien Chou; "My

Baby" Hung-Ran Zhi,

performed by Chih-

Chin Lee; "Teahouse

History" by Bob Chen,

performed by Yueh-Yun

Pan; "Questions About

Love" by Jonathan Lee,

performed by Shu-Hwa

Chen; "Jack and Jill" by

Bob Chen, performed

by Yueh-Yun Pan, Bob

Chen; "Give Me Your

Reply" by Li Lu, Li Yau,

performed by Li Yau;

"You Make Me Happy

and Sad" by Rye Aska,

Jonathan Lee,

performed by Chin-

Cheung Lu; "Ave

Maria" by Giuseppe

Verdi, performed by

the Westminster Choir;

"Sing Ye to the Lord"

by George Frederic

Handel, performed by

The Sine Nomine

Singers, Baroque

Orchestra; "All

Creatures Great and

Small" performed

by The Mormon

Tabernacle Choir

Supervising Sound Editor

Steve Hamilton

Sound Editors

Alex Albanese

Pamela Martin

Steve Silkensen

Production Sound Mixer

Tom Paul

Music Mixer

Eric Liljestrand

Dolby stereo

consultant:

Bradford L. Hohle

Post-production Mixer

Reilly Steele

Food Consultants

Huei-Yi Lin

Chien-Fa Shih

Cast  
Sihung Lung  
Mr Chu  
Yu-Wen Wang  
Jia-Ning  
Chien-Lien Wu  
Jia-Chien  
Kuei-Mai Yang  
Jia-Jen  
Sylvia Chang  
Jin-Rong  
Winston Chao  
Li Kai  
Chao-Jung Chen  
Guo Lun  
Lester Chen  
Raymond  
Yu Chen  
Rachel  
Ah-Leh Gwa  
Mrs Liang  
Chi-Ber Hong  
Class Leader  
Gin-Ming Hsu  
Coach Chai  
Huei-Yi Lin  
Sister Chang

Shih-Jay Lin  
Chief's Son  
Chin-Cheng Lu  
Ming-Dao  
Cho-Gin Nei  
Airline Secretary  
Yu-Chien Tang  
Shan-Shan  
Chung Ting  
Priest  
Cheng-Fen Tso  
Fast Food Manager  
Man-Sheng Tu  
Restaurant Manager  
Chuen Wang  
Chief  
Jui Wang  
Old Wen  
Hwa Wu  
Old Man

11,133 feet  
124 minutes

Dolby stereo  
In colour  
DuArt  
Subtitles

Taipei. Master chef Mr Chu has raised three daughters on his own. They live with him even though they are now adult. The youngest, Jia-Ning, is a student who also works part-time at a fast food restaurant; school-teacher Jia-Jen is a recent convert to Christianity; and Jia-Chien is an airline executive. Each night, Chu cooks elaborate meals for them which he cannot enjoy, as his sense of taste has disappeared.

Jia-Chien announces that she is moving out to her own apartment. Mr Chu visits his brother and fellow chef Wen at their restaurant. Jia-Jen's old friend and neighbour Jin-Rong - who has a small daughter, Rachel - is getting divorced and her mother Mrs Liang is coming to stay. Chu meets Rachel while out jogging and promises to prepare her daily meals. Jia-Ning takes a shine to Guo Lun, a friend's neglected boyfriend. Jia-Chien is attracted to Li Kai, a new recruit at her company.

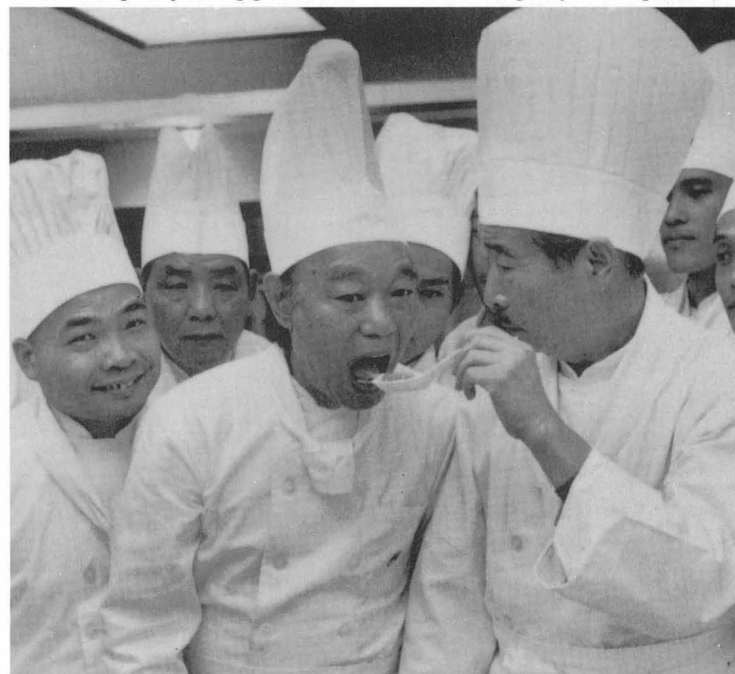
Jia-Chien learns that she is up for promotion to work in Amsterdam. Chu visits Wen and gives him a new sauce to try, but Wen has a seizure and is taken to hospital. Jia-Ming goes out on

a date with Guo Lun. Jia-Chien finds out the real estate company that she bought her apartment from was trading fraudulently. Jing Rong and Mrs Liang visit Chu and his family. At school, Jia-Jen - still getting over a heartbreak years earlier - is receiving anonymous love letters, but is also asked out on a date by Ming Dao, the school's new sports coach. Jia-Chien and Li Kai also go out together.

One evening, Jia-Ning announces that she is pregnant and will be moving out to live with Guo Lun. Chu can hardly say good-bye. Later he visits Mrs Liang. Jia-Chien and Li Kai seem to be getting it together, but then she starts suspecting that he might be the man who broke her sister's heart nine years ago; however, it turns out that Jia-Jen invented the story. Meanwhile, Wen returns to work only to collapse and die.

At school, Jia-Jen makes a public announcement about the love letters and discovers that some pupils have been sending them; she is comforted by Ming Dao. Jia-Chien visits her occasional lover, Raymond, and learns that he is getting married. She turns down the job promotion. Later, at the family meal, Jia-Jen announces that she and Ming Dao have married. Only Jia-Chien now remains at home with Chu. At a family get-together, Chu announces that he is marrying Jin-Rong and is going to sell the family home. Months later, Jia-Chien is settled in the family home. Chu, now expecting a child by Jin-Rong, visits for a meal, and finds his sense of taste restored.

"Eat, drink, man, woman, food, sex - the basics of life," so declares Mr Chu. Ang Lee's second film follows *The Wedding Banquet* in arguing that the simple ingredients of life are not always a given in contemporary society. Shots of traffic-ridden Taipei are a recurring motif, indicating the modernising and westernising of a culture. Lee gently develops and ►



Stirring the emotions: Jui Wang, Sihung Lung



◀ ironically underpins this contrast with tradition. Jia-Ning works part time at a fast-food restaurant, yet goes home to her father's ample meals each night. Jet-setting Jia-Chien's plans to buy a New York-style apartment are destroyed by fraud. Jia-Jen, the Baptist convert, listens to choral music on a Walkman. Lee highlights such cultural juxtapositions and elucidates their impact on tradition within the family. However, the 'Man, Woman' part of Mr Chu's equation proves not to be so simple. Just as the parents in *The Wedding Banquet* must learn to accept that their son is gay, the widower Mr Chu has to acknowledge that his career-minded daughters will not jump to perpetuate the family line.

But these generational differences are not all that separates Chu from his children. Like every fairy story that starts "Once upon a time, there was a king with three daughters", *Eat Drink Man Woman* is rooted in parental anxieties. Apart from her portrait hanging in the dining room, the deceased mother is a conspicuous absence. Chu himself is set awkwardly apart from his female progeny. In doing their laundry, he lumps together all their underwear. When he knocks on their bedroom doors each morning, he seems almost frightened to go in. Such events stand for his general unease with their sexuality. In this respect, his surprise marriage to Jin-Rong, his eldest daughter's oldest friend, seems almost taboo-breaking – the repressed erupting in a most revealing manner.

Affection is displayed in the fetishistically lavish feasts that Chu prepares for his daughters (the recipes for which he writes down, as if to inscribe them in law), but even this culinary currency is devalued. Chu's loss of his sense of taste is matched by his daughters' lack of appetite. Thus the plumping of glistening dumplings, the filleting of succulent fish and the sizzling of crisp vegetables – all brilliantly choreographed as a frenzied musical cum action spectacle – becomes empty ritual, a literal flash in the pan. The film hints at the relationship that the cinema audience might have to such a delectable but flavourless and odourless sight. The vision of food being prepared provides the *mise en scène* of desire deferred. But without the actual satisfaction of our noses and palates, we are put in the same position as Chu.

It is the emotional release at the end which neatly ties together the film's disparate strands. With Jin-Chien – who earlier demanded to know why a woman could not be considered a real chef – now installed in the family home and kitchen, the film modulates its mood from the comic to the pensive and emotional. It's as if a magic spell has been broken, Chu finds his sense of taste and smell restored by her cooking, signifying a moment of reconciliation between the two. Less mouth-than eye-watering, the scene makes manifest the various needs that bind a family by setting a mother back at the heart of it.

**Lizzie Francke**

## BRITISH INDEPENDENTS

# Dark Summer

United Kingdom 1994

Director: Charles Teton

### Certificate

12

### Distributor

2C Productions

### Production Company

2C/Activate

### Producers

Charles Teton

### Associate Producers

Derrin Schlesinger

Mary Calderwood

### Production Manager

Chris Darwin

### Screenplay

Charles Teton

### Additional Material:

Bernie Deasy

Steve Cheers

Bernie Lühke

### Director of Photography

Charles Teton

### Editor

Charles Teton

### Production Designer

Elouise Attwood

### Art Director

Kate Jones

### Titles/Opticals

General Screen

Enterprises

### Music

Clive Chin

### Music Performed by

Melodica:

Augustus Pablo

Drums:

Carlton Barrett

Lloyd 'Tinleg' Adams

Carlton 'Santa' Davies

Bass:

Aston 'Family Man' Barrett

George 'Fully' Fullwood

Guitar:

Earl 'Chinna' Smith

Reggie Lewis

Ranchie McLean

Aston 'Fams' Barrett

Keyboards:

Ansel Collins

Augustus Pablo

Glen Adams

Keith Sterling

Percussion:

Clive Chin

Errol 'ET' Thompson

### Music Arrangements

Clive Chin

H. Swaby

### Songs/Music Extracts

"Dub Organiser", "Too

Late", "Skateland

Rock", "Assignment

No.1", "Arabian Rock",

"Jah Rock" by Clive

Chin; "Please Sunrise",

"Bread Eye", "Pretty

Baby" (adapted);

"Lover's Mood" by

H. Swaby; "Without

Love Where Would

You Be Now" by

Stephen J. 'Crazy

Bushell; "Peaceful

Rain" by Russ Bell-

Brown

### Foley Mixer

Edward Colyer

### Sound Recordist

Joss Jotham

2nd Unit:

John Morgan

Dubbing Mixer

Brian Saunders

### Foley Artist

Lucy Fawcett

### Amateur Boxing

Technical Adviser

Bernie Deary

### Cast

Steve Ako

Abraham Wilson

Joeline Garnier-Joel

Jess Shepherd

Chris Darwin

Alan Shepherd

Sylvia Amoo

Mother

Wayne Ako

Brother

Marlene Amoo

Sister

Bernie Deasy

Amateur Coach

Tom Williamson

Doctor in Hospital

Marie Higham

Receptionist

Francis Bell

Clinic Administrator

Neil Antony

Bar Manager at 051

Dave Rooney

Pro Manager

Jimmy Fitz

Pro Trainer

Dave Murray

2nd Trainer

Louis Cuddy

Alex Moon

Adam Ryan

Michael Thompson

Bradley Gonzales

Jamie Naylor

Tommy Singleton

James Lally

Carl Pennington

Thomas Smith

Sean William

Boxers

Paul Thomas Billington

John Chanall

John Bernard Fitzgerald

Terry F. Kavanagh

John McLoughlin

Mark D. Roberts

John Bucknall

Bernard Cullen

Timothy Graham

John Lloyd

Dermott Mullholland

D. Thompson

A. Capbell

Billy Barwin

Paul Hallmark

Carl McCabe

Joe Naylor

Paddy Walsley

Timekeepers/Seconds/

Refs

7,650 feet

85 minutes

### Dolby stereo

In colour

Anamorphic

● Liverpool. Abe, a young black man, works at a scrap metal yard, along with Jess, daughter of his boss Alan. Without Alan knowing, the two begin to date. In his spare time, Abe boxes on an amateur basis, with some success. He reaches the north-west finals but loses a close bout, after which a visiting boxing manager tries to interest him in fighting profession-

ally. After Alan catches Abe and Jess kissing in his office, Abe is dismissed. Jess leaves with Abe, moving into his flat. While she secures work as a barmaid, Abe is unable to find another job and takes up the offer to turn professional, receiving a small advance.

Jess discovers she is pregnant and she and Abe set about preparing the flat for the baby's arrival. Abe continues to train hard. Jess miscarries and Abe abandons training to stay at home and tend to her. Jess is mired in depression but keeps her feelings to herself. Abe becoming frustrated at her lack of communication. He loses his first professional fight when his manager sets him up against an opponent likely to beat him, the manager collecting on a bet made against Abe. Abe returns home to find that Jess has left him.

● *Dark Summer* does not offer much in the way of a story. Little happens, and what does is, in fictional terms, routine. The style, however, is anything but routine. First-time director and co-writer Charles Teton shoots in CinemaScope and absolutely refuses to move his camera.

The temptation when reviewing the fixed-camera style is to see necessity at work – a limited budget, for instance, or a lack of experienced operators (Teton also acts as cinematographer). Nonetheless, the result is a highly coherent, controlled manner which betokens at the very least a cool weighing-up of resources and an exemplary exploitation of them. *Dark Summer* has a documentary feel: characters come to the camera, walk into the frame; and the dialogue is very flat. And yet, there's no attempt to achieve an intimate portrait. Liverpool is as prominent as any of the characters, the camera often lingering on a body-free landscape. Or else Abe, out training, runs into a frame and is embedded in the background, dwarfed by the vestiges of the city's industrial past. At such moments the film is fly-on-the-outside-wall, as if trained on a place rather than on people, capturing a gentle decay, the stillness only broken by Abe's running. The soundtrack from Augustus Pablo complements the images, its steadily insistent reggae carrying an undertow of melancholy.

Teton has taken great care in composing each frame. With outdoor shots, his photography picks out patterns in apparent disorder, finding, for instance, harmony and poise in the mess of machinery and scrap in the yard. The use of CinemaScope only reinforces the sense of watching something carefully constructed. (In this choice, at least, Teton's hand was not forced; using CinemaScope was very much an aesthetic decision.) *Dark Summer* might aspire somehow to reflect 'real life' but Teton makes it clear that it does so in a highly stylised way. Ultimately, the film suffers perhaps from its own rigour, a rigour which comes to resemble monotony. But as a sustained exercise in a style, it's an impressive debut.

**Robert Yates**

## NFT PREVIEW

# That's Entertainment! III

USA 1994

Directors: Bud Friedgen, Michael J. Sheridan

### Certificate

U

### Distributor

MGM (USA)

### Executive Producer

Peter Fitzgerald

### Producers

Bud Friedgen

Michael J. Sheridan

### Production Co-ordinator

Bradley Flanagan

### Unit Production Manager

Ric Rondell

### Film Restoration Supervisor

Richard P. May

### Music and Sound Archivist

Scott Perry

### Film Restoration

Co-ordinator

Lydia Avalos

### Assistant Directors

Ric Rondell

Dan Silverberg

### Casting

Bud Friedgen

Michael J. Sheridan

### Additional Photography

Howard A. Anderson III

### Camera Operator

Andy Martinez

### Optical Effects

Gary Crandall

### Editors

Bud Friedgen

Michael J. Sheridan

### Wardrobe Supervisor

Pasquale Spezzano

### Make-up

Dee Mansano

### Hair stylist

Marsha Lewis

### Title Design

Charles McDonald

### Titles/Opticals

Howard A.

Anderson Co.

### Additional Music

Marc Shaiman

Performed by:

John Mauceri and

The Hollywood Bowl

Orchestra

### Recordist/Mixer:

Joel Moss

### Orchestrations

Jeff Attmajian

Larry Blank

Hummie Mann

### Music Supervisor

Marilee Bradford

### Songs/Music Extracts

"Here's to the Girls"

by Roger Edens,

performed by Fred

Astaire, Lucille Ball;

"My Pet" by Milton

Ager, Jack Yellen,

performed by the Five

Locust Sisters; "Singin'

in the Rain" by Nacio

Herb Brown, Arthur

Freed, performed by

Joan Crawford, Marion

Davies, George K.

Arthur, Jack Benny,

Bessie Love, Polly

Moran, Buster Keaton,

Marie Dressler; "The

Lock Step" by Fred

Ahlert, Roy Turk,

performed by The

Dodge Twins; "Clean

as a Whistle" by James

McHugh; "Hollywood

Party" by Richard

Rodgers, Lorenz Hart,

performed by Frances

Williams; "Feelin'

High" by Walter

Donaldson, Howard

Dietsch, performed by

The King's Men;

"Follow in My Foot-

steps/Your Broadway

and my Broadway/



Reynolds; "You Stepped out of a Dream" by Nacio Herb Brown, Gus Kahn, performed by Tony Martin, Lana Turner, Hedy Lamarr; "A Lady Loves" by Josef Myrow, Mack Gordon, performed by Debbie Reynolds; "Thanks a Lot, But No Thanks" by Andre Previn, Betty Comden, Adolph Green, performed by Dolores Grey; "Two Faced Woman" by Arthur Schwartz, Howard Dietz, performed by 1) Joan Crawford, 2) Cyd Charisse, both dubbed by India Adams; "Dance of Fury" by Nacio Herb Brown, performed by Ricardo Montalban, Ann Miller, Cyd Charisse; "Cha Bomm Pa Pa" by Ray Gilbert, performed by Carmen Miranda; "Mama Yo Quiero" by Vincent Paiva, Jararaca Paiva, performed by Mickey Rooney; "Where or When" by Richard Rodgers, Lorenz Hart, performed by Lena Horne; "Just One of Those Things" by Cole Porter, performed by Lena Horne; "Ain't it the Truth" by Harold Arlen, E.Y. Harburg, performed by Lena Horne; "Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man" by Jerome Kern, Oscar Hammerstein II, performed by 1) Ava Gardner, partially dubbed by Annette Warren, 2) Lena Horne; "I Wish I Were in Love Again" by Richard Rodgers, Lorenz Hart, performed by Judy Garland, Mickey Rooney; "Swing Mr Mendelssohn", "In Between" by Roger Edens, performed by Judy Garland; "We're Off to See the Wizard" by Harold Arlen, E.Y. Harburg, performed by The Munchkins; "Over the Rainbow" by Harold Arlen, E.Y. Harburg, performed by Judy Garland; "How About You" by Burton Lane, Ralph Freed, performed by Judy Garland, Mickey Rooney; "Who" by Jerome Kern, performed by Judy Garland; "March of the Doagies" by Harry Warren, Johnny Mercer, performed by Judy Garland, Ray Bolger, Cyd Charisse, Kenny Baker, Marjorie Main, Chill Wills; "It Only Happens when I Dance with You" by Irving Berlin, performed by Fred Astaire, Ann Miller; "Italian Cafe Routine" by Walter Bullock, performed by Fred Astaire, Eleanor Powell; "Drum Crazy" by Irving Berlin, performed by Fred Astaire; "The Girl Hunt" by Arthur Schwartz, performed by Fred Astaire, Cyd Charisse; "Swing Trot" by Harry Warren, Ira Gershwin, performed by Fred Astaire, Ginger Rogers; "I Wanna Be A Dancin' Man" by Harry Warren, Johnny Mercer; "Anything

You Can Do" by Irving Berlin, performed by Betty Hutton, Howard Keel; "Stereophonic Sound" by Cole Porter, performed by Fred Astaire, Janis Paige; "Shakin' the Blues Away" by Irving Berlin, performed by Doris Day; "Jailhouse Rock" by Jerry Leiber, Mike Stoller, performed by Elvis Presley; "Gigi" by Frederic Loewe, Alan Jay Lerner, performed by Louis Jourdan; "That's Entertainment" by Arthur Schwartz, Howard Dietz, performed by Fred Astaire, Cyd Charisse, Nanette Fabray, Oscar Levant, Jack Buchanan

**Sound Recordists**  
Dave Kelson  
Bill Teague

**Music Recordist**  
Hummie Mann

**Re-recording Mixer**  
Tom Long

**Sound Restoration and Re-recording**  
Chace Productions

**Digital Audio Restoration Engineering**  
Reid W. Caulfield

**Richard B. Larimore**  
James G. Crawford  
Robert "Rocky" Reiger  
Barry Goldberg  
James B. Young

**Supervising Sound Effects Editor**  
Bill Bell

**Film Restoration**  
Cinetech

**Film Extracts**  
Ziegfeld Follies (1944)  
The Five Luscious Sisters (1928)  
The Hollywood Revue of 1929 (1929)  
The March of Time (1930)  
Meet the Baron (1933)  
Hollywood Party (1934)  
Broadway Melody of 1938 (1937)  
Lady Be Good (1941)  
Babes in Arms (1939)  
This Time For Keeps (1947)  
Till The Clouds Roll By (1946)  
Best Foot Forward (1943)  
Anchors Aweigh (1945)  
Easter Parade (1948)  
Good News (1947)  
Broadway Rhythm (1944)  
It's Always Fair Weather (1955)  
For Me and My Gal (1942)  
Summer Stock (1950)  
Words and Music (1948)  
An American in Paris (1951)  
Singin' in the Rain (1952)  
Brigadoon (1954)  
Ziegfeld Girl (1941)  
I Love Melvin (1953)  
Torch Song (1953)  
The Kissing Bandit (1948)  
Nancy Goes to Rio (1949)  
Babes on Broadway (1941)  
Panama Hattie (1942)  
Show Boat (1951)  
Everybody Sing (1938)  
Love Finds Andy Hardy (1938)  
The Wizard of Oz (1939)  
Easter Parade (1948)  
Broadway Melody of 1940 (1939)  
The Band Wagon (1953)  
The Barkleys of Broadway (1949)  
The Belle of New York (1952)  
Annie Get Your Gun (1950)  
Silk Stockings (1957)  
Love Me or Leave Me (1955)  
Jailhouse Rock (1957)  
Gigi (1958)

**Cast**  
June Allyson  
Cyd Charisse  
Lena Horne  
Howard Keel  
Gene Kelly  
Ann Miller  
Debbie Reynolds  
Mickey Rooney  
Esther Williams  
Hosts

**Granville Van Dusen**  
Beginning Narrator

**10,170 feet**  
**113 minutes**

**Dolby stereo**  
**In colour**  
**De Luxe**

● An anthology drawn from classic MGM musicals, including not only familiar numbers but also outtakes, behind-the-scenes footage and other previously unseen material, linked by reminiscences from Gene Kelly, Cyd Charisse, Lena Horne, Howard Keel, June Allyson, Mickey Rooney, Debbie Reynolds, Esther Williams and Ann Miller.

● By the third episode of any series of films, an audience is entitled to feel wary, fearful of the law of diminishing returns, and it's undeniable that *That's Entertainment! III* is a weaker offering than its predecessors (released in 1974 and 1976), acknowledging this by reprising their finest moments in its closing montage. Given the fact, however, that third-string MGM product was still better than most studios' first-rate output, this is still an irresistible goodie bag of a film, joyously overflowing with showbiz excess and ridiculous, life-enhancing virtuosity. You leave it feeling sandbagged by glamour.

The early *That's Entertainment!* films may have cherry-picked all the paradigmatic numbers, but *III* still delights with 'lesser' routines from *On the Town*

and *Singin' in the Rain*, clips from films just outside the pantheon (there are two particularly terrific numbers from *It's Always Fair Weather*), and glimpses of once-popular stars who haven't managed to secure the long-term reputation they deserved – the leather lungs of Betty Hutton all but steal the show.

In a new and politically-conscious departure for the series, the tone is not entirely celebratory. Lena Horne's contribution cuts through the sugar to point out how the MGM musical played its part in the history of Hollywood racism, confining her to minor roles and denying her the part in *Showboat* that eventually went to Ava Gardner. Salutary as this is, it's also a little evasive, inasmuch as Horne is allowed to speak only in terms of personal disappointments, leaving broader questions of ethnic representation unexplored. The sequencing of the film further defuses her critique by following it with 'I'm an Indian Too' from *Annie Get Your Gun*, a howling example of racial insensitivity. Horne aside, the surviving stars are content to wander, slightly dazed, through the backlots of their own nostalgia, and the primary pleasure to be gleaned from seeing them do this is to marvel at the artistry of California's cosmetic surgeons, June Allyson's improbably taut visage being especially compelling.

Another innovation in this third film is the inclusion of unseen footage. We're shown numbers filmed for but then trimmed from (among others) *The Harvey Girls*, *Easter Parade* and *Cabin in the Sky*, a treat for genre completists,

even if, in truth, none of them were greatly missed in the finished products. Demystifying clips show how dance routines were put together in the studio (though personally I prefer my musicals still mystifying), while split-screen comparisons present different versions of the same song. Elsewhere there are snippets of the novelty acts MGM occasionally employed in search of a gimmick. The Ross Sisters, close-harmony contortionists who resemble The Andrews Sisters auditioning for Tod Browning's *Freaks*, here receive their overdue footnote in film history.

It's a film destined for video, where it can be productively raided for the treats it contains – Mickey Rooney in drag as Carmen Miranda, the rationality-defying Miranda herself, the spell-binding speed of Ann Miller's tap dancing, and enough Judy to send any Garland-queen subsiding into sighs of bliss. There are educational moments too – Esther Williams' ability to grin radiantly underwater is clearly the inspiration for the entire sport of synchronised swimming, and Joan Crawford in blackface in *Torch Song* (made, for heaven's sake, in 1953) is the most politically incorrect slice of kitsch ever committed to celluloid. The final impressions left by a film like this are a kind of awe, that so much sweat should be expended on so much gossamer, and a deep gratitude, that such all-singing all-dancing feasts are still there for the relishing whenever the end of the century wears us down.

**Andy Medhurst**



**A hooper you can't refuse: Ann Miller**



# VIDEO

Mark Kermode and Peter Dean highlight their ten video choices of the month, and overleaf review, respectively, the rest of the rental and retail releases

## VIDEO CHOICE

### Crossing the Bridge

Director Mike Binder/USA 1992

Writer/director Mike Binder (who scripted the excellent *Coupe de Ville*) injects an impressive amount of melancholy into this simple yet accomplished tale about a group of boys growing out of adolescence. After years of straying into Canada (where illicit pleasures are freely available), three dispossessed American teenagers are lured into smuggling a stash of marijuana back across the border. Danny (Stephen Baldwin) and Tim (Jason Gedrick) see the scam as an act of youthful rebellion, but Mort (Josh Charles) senses disaster and tries to lead his friends away from trouble. Understated direction and uniformly strong performances from a young cast make this a cut above the usual teen-torment fodder. Binder ably evokes the trials of adolescence without being mawkish.

● Rental Premiere: EV EVV 1276; Certificate 15; 99 minutes; Producer Jeffrey Silver; Screenplay Mike Binder; Lead Actors Stephen Baldwin, Jason Gedrick, Josh Charles



Troubled teens: 'Crossing the Bridge'



Bloody-minded: Robert De Niro in 'Raging Bull'

### Raging Bull

Director Martin Scorsese/USA 1980

Welcome re-release in widescreen for this seminal bio-pic about the brutal life – in and out of the ring – of middleweight champion boxer Jake La Motta (powerfully played by Robert De Niro). Scorsese, with the help of scriptwriters Paul Schrader and Mardik Martin, is concerned with showing a violent man's struggle to find inner contentment. The film follows La Motta's career from top

contender in 1941 to overweight bar owner in the mid-60s. Plaudits are due to Thelma Schoonmaker's sharp editing, Michael Chapman's glorious black and white cinematography and Scorsese's skilful direction. A masterpiece of cinema, considered by many critics to be the best film of the 80s and, along with *Fat City*, perhaps the best boxing movie ever made. (MFB No. 565)

● Retail: Warner SO 51322; Price £15.99; B/W and Colour; Widescreen; Certificate 18



Cruel world: 'The Blue Kite'

### The Blue Kite (Lan Fengzheng)

Director Tian Zhuangzhuang/Hong Kong/China 1992

Based on the director's family history, this complex, domestic melodrama – spanning the years from the early 50s through to the aftermath of the Cultural Revolution – centres on the misfortunes of a Chinese family in Beijing. The tragic fate of Chen Shujuan, a schoolteacher, is seen through the eyes of her child Tietou.

A kite flown by Tietou's father during the opening credits, is left caught and tattered in a tree at the film's conclusion, as his mother, accused of being a counter-revolutionary, is taken away to a labour camp. This underlies the director's bleak message that happiness is fragile and elusive. A moving film which aroused the wrath of the Chinese authorities who banned Tian from leaving the country to edit it. (S&S February 1994)

● Retail: ICA Projects ICAV 1012; Price £13.99; Subtitles; Certificate PG

### Intersection

Director Mark Rydell/USA 1994

Solidly written by David Rayfield and Marshall Brickman, this tightly structured drama whirrs with the efficiency of a Swiss-made watch. Richard Gere stars as Vincent Eastmen, an architect stricken by guilt over the breakdown of his marriage to a beautiful woman (Sharon Stone), but unable to commit himself to his girlfriend Olivia (Lolita Davidovich). Eastmen's car spins out of control while on his way to an uncertain destination, and, in the ensuing chaos, we see the events which lead to the crisis in flashback. Despite the thirtysomething subject matter, even the most hardened cynic will admire the elegance of the screenplay, and, for once, director Mark Rydell soft peddles the dramatic saccharine. Gere and Davidovich go through the motions with style, but the real surprise is Stone who turns in a mature, low-key performance as the spurned wife. (S&S July 1994)

● Rental: Paramount VHB 2853; Certificate 15



Richard Gere: 'Intersection'





The in-crowd: 'True Romance'

## True Romance

Director Tony Scott/USA 1993

Although temporarily refused a video certificate, this Quentin Tarantino scripted romp was finally passed by the BBFC uncut from its British theatrical release. However, since the cinema version was trimmed from the American print, this doesn't quite qualify as "uncut". The plot contains all the usual Tarantino touches: a video store worker, a glamorous moll, a selection of bad, bad guys, Elvis Presley, swearing, guns, drugs and cinematic in-jokes. Christian Slater and Patricia Arquette make an enticing duo, but top marks go to Dennis Hopper and Christopher Walken, both in cameo roles, who steal the show from under everyone's noses. Silly fun, bursting with senseless thrills and with an admirable lack of social responsibility. (S&S November 1993)

● Rental: Warner V012992; Certificate 18

## Naked in New York

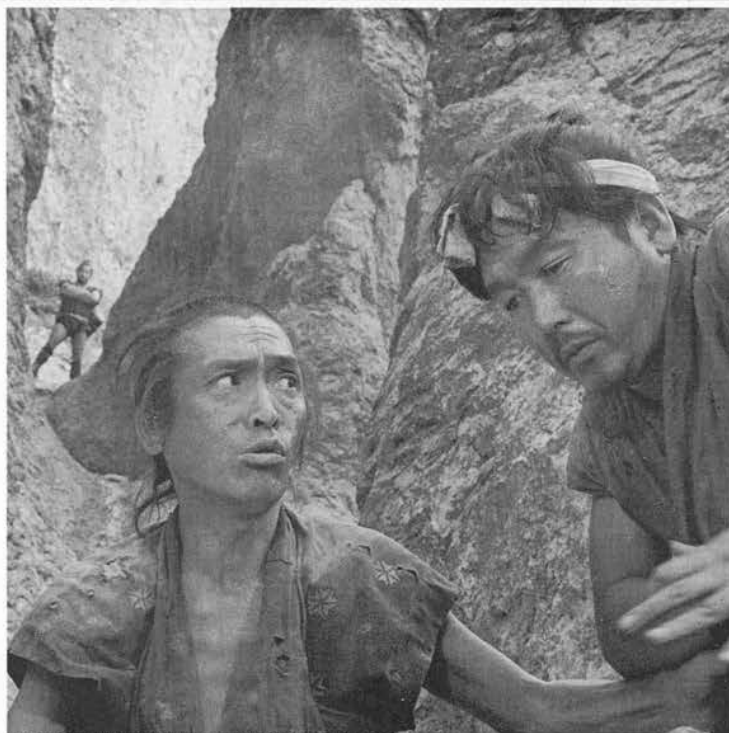
Director Dan Algrant/USA 1993

With Martin Scorsese as executive producer and a score composed by Angelo Badalamenti, you could be forgiven for expecting this to have some depth, wit and originality. What you get is a perky but predictable rehash of *The Big Picture*, with the action transferred from the screen to the stage. An idealistic young writer (a likeable Eric Stoltz), struggling to get his first play staged on Broadway, gets into bed with a slimy producer (a convincingly decrepit Tony Curtis) and a gregarious but obnoxious star (Kathleen Turner). The question is, can he maintain artistic credibility, long-standing friendships and his relationship with Mary Louise Parker? This makes for enjoyable viewing. The cast have fun with the caricatured roles and Dan Algrant and John Warren's script contains snippets of recognisable truth, but it's otherwise a surprisingly insubstantial piece.

● Rental Premiere: Imagine IMAG 505; 93 minutes; Producer Frederick Zollo; Screenplay Dan Algrant, John Warren; Lead Actors Eric Stoltz, Mary Louise Parker, Kathleen Turner, Tony Curtis



Stage fright: 'Naked in New York'



Rogues and robots: Kurosawa's 'The Hidden Fortress'

## The Hidden Fortress (Kakushi Toride no San-Akunin)

Director Akira Kurosawa/Japan 1958

This epic adventure, with its sweeping narrative and well-defined characters, is one of Kurosawa's most accessible and rousing pictures. At times, it seems as if the director has made a Hollywood version of feudal Japan – the fire festival sequence resembles a big production number from a musical. But, what makes

it interesting is Kurosawa's observations on ancient Japanese society. For example, through the eyes of a cloistered princess (fleeing to safety with the mysterious General Rokurota, played by Toshiro Mifune) we witness religious rituals and the role of women in a male hierarchy. George Lucas cited *Hidden Fortress* as his inspiration for *Star Wars*, with the two bungling, disreputable soldiers transformed into R2-D2 and C-3PO. An engrossing film. (MFB No. 327) ● Retail: Connoisseur Video CR 168; Price £15.99; Subtitles: B/W; Widescreen; Certificate PG



A love affair to remember: 'Go Fish'

## Go Fish

Director Rose Troche/USA 1994

*Go Fish* is a lesbian love story which, thankfully, doesn't fall into the cliché of portraying its protagonists as victims. Made on a shoestring budget and shot in a sharp, spiky style, it tells the tale of a young writer Max, (co-writer and producer Guinevere Turner), searching for a suitable girlfriend. Max and Ely (V.S. Brodie), egged on by their respective

flatmates, become lovers and find themselves the main topic of gossip in Chicago's lesbian community. With succinct scripting, punchy editing and imaginative direction, *Go Fish* augurs well for future projects from Troche. Its sexual politics are the antithesis of those in Spike Lee's *She's Gotta Have It*, but it shows similar promise and skill. A delight. (S&S July 1994)

● Retail: Mainline Pictures ML 015; Price £15.99; B/W; Certificate 18



Michael J. Fox in 'Greedy'

## Greedy

Director Jonathan Lynn/USA 1994

The McTeague clan are an unlovable bunch, crawling to millionaire Uncle Joe (Kirk Douglas) so as to inherit his fortune. When a young nurse arrives on the scene and diverts Uncle Joe's attention, his loathsome relatives enlist the aid of an estranged favourite nephew (Michael J. Fox). But will Joe see through their tricks? Although the idea is unoriginal, Lynn's nicely nasty farce succeeds by humiliating all its characters (even loveable Fox shamelessly grovels under the indignities of avarice). Douglas is perfect as a rascal with a heart of stone.

● Rental Premiere: CIC VHA 1775; Certificate 12; 108 minutes; Producer Brian Grazer; Screenplay Lowell Ganz, Babaloo Mandel; Lead Actors Kirk Douglas, Michael J. Fox, Nancy Travis, Ed Begley Jr

## Tiger on the Beat

Director Liu Chia Liang/Hong Kong 1988

A comedy thriller which resembles Jackie Chan's *Police Story*, happily, without the slapstick. An ill-fated police sergeant (Chow Yun Fat) joins forces with a human 'lethal weapon' (Conan Lee) to bust a drug syndicate. Lee performs the obligatory acrobatic fight sequences with aplomb, and it is interesting to compare this early offering with Chow's later roles in *God of Gamblers* and John Woo's *The Killer* and *Hard-Boiled*, to observe how his screen persona has matured.

● Retail Premiere: Made in Hong Kong HK 010; Price £15.99; Subtitles; Certificate 18; 89 minutes; Producers Wellington W. Fung, Tsana Kwok Chi; Screenplay Tsana Kwok Chi; Lead Actors Chow Yun Fat, Conan Lee, Ti Lung, Nina Li Chi, Tsui Sui Keung, Lau Kar Fei



Vicious humour: 'Tiger on the Beat'



Reviews in Monthly Film Bulletin and Sight and Sound are cited in parentheses. A retail video that has previously been reviewed in the rental section will be listed only and the film review reference given. The term 'Premiere' refers to a film that has had no prior UK theatrical release and is debuting on video. □ denotes closed captioning facility

## Rental

### Beyond Bedlam

Director Vadim Jean; UK 1994; PolyGram PG 1063; Certificate 18  
Having had its provisional video certificate withdrawn, Vadim Jean's ambitious (and partially successful) mix of horror and black comedy now surfaces on video with only minor cuts totalling 16 seconds. It's hard to see what all the fuss was about – the film is neither gratuitously nor excessively violent, and relies instead on preposterous psychological thrills. Novelist John Brosnan, under his self-deprecating pseudonym Harry Adam Knight (H.A.K.), provides the inspiration. (S&S May 1994)

### A Business Affair

Director Charlotte Brandstrom; UK/France/Germany/Spain 1993; EV EVV 1297; Certificate 15  
A sparkling performance by Christopher Walken and strong support from Jonathan Pryce and Carole Bouquet, save this Euro-pudding from disaster. When a business-minded American publisher (Walken) takes on an arty English author (Pryce), his attentions are soon diverted by the writer's alluring wife Kate (Bouquet), who harbours her own ambitions to be a novelist. Too television-style for the big screen, this untaxing entertainment is more suited to video. (S&S June 1994)

### Naked Gun 33½: The Final Insult

Director Peter Segal; USA 1994; Paramount VHB 2900; Certificate 12  
The weakest of the Naked Gun spoof series, this nevertheless prompts the odd chuckle as straight-faced Leslie Nielsen bumbles his way through a series of adventures, climaxing in the destruction of the Academy Awards ceremony. Priscilla Presley continues to impress as a comic stooge, while the presence of O.J. Simpson is unsettling. (S&S June 1994)

### The Paper

Director Ron Howard; USA 1994; Universal VHA 1774; Certificate PG  
Ron Howard's day in the life of a big city newspaper passes as engrossing throw-away entertainment. Plaudits are due to Michael Keaton, Marisa Tomei and Glenn Close who efficiently front the impressive, likeable cast. The infectious up-beat score is by Randy Newman. (S&S May 1994)

### Police Academy: Mission to Moscow

Director Alan Metter; USA 1994; Warner V013357; Certificate PG  
From the director of Cold Dog Soup, this is the seventh in the dull Police Academy series. A squad of stupid American police create havoc in Moscow. Christopher Lee makes a brief appearance to collect his cheque. (S&S September 1994)

### Reality Bites

Director Ben Stiller; USA 1994; Universal VHA 1760; Certificate 12  
A dreary pretender to Richard Linklater's Slacker. A group of irritating, privileged ex-students whine their way through a series of personal growth moments. Winona Ryder is dire as a wannabe documentary film-maker, while Ethan Hawke's self-obsessed fledgling pop star deserves to be spanked. (S&S July 1994) □

### The Sandlot Kids

Director David Mickey Evans; USA 1993; FoxVideo 8500; Certificate PG  
Amiable if unremarkable kids fare, directed and co-written by David Mickey Evans, screenwriter of the underrated Radio Flyer. In Salt Lake City, 1962, a group of young baseball playing children overcome their fear of a mysterious neighbour and his ferocious dog. (S&S August 1994)

### Staggered

Director Martin Clunes; UK 1993; EV EVV 1295; Certificate 15  
Hapless toy demonstrator Martin Clunes is slipped a Mickey on his stag night and wakes up naked on a remote Scottish island. On the journey home, he encounters a rogue's gallery of English oddities, including a zealous policeman (John Forgeham), a vampiric-Goth trainee pathologist (Anna Chancellor) and a travelling salesman with a penchant for four-way suburban action (Griff Rhys Jones). Uneven fare, but Clunes' debut is not without charm. (S&S September 1994)

### Thumbelina

Directors Don Bluth/Gary Goldman; USA/Eire 1994; Warner V013080; Certificate U  
Passable but uninspired animated retelling of the classic fairy tale by the visually inventive, but narratively shaky, director Don Bluth. (S&S August 1994) □

## Rental premiere

### Bachelor Jamboree

Director Richard Gabai; USA 1994; Guild G8778; Certificate 18; 87 minutes; Producer Screenplay Richard Gabai; Lead Actors Linnea Quigley, Michelle Bauer, Burt Ward, Rhonda Shear  
Despite two tentative titles so far (it was



Deadline diva: Glenn Close in 'The Paper'



Slightly cut, but not harmed: 'Beyond Bedlam'

briefly called Bachelor Party II) this is the latest instalment in the grotesque *Revenge of the Party Nerds* series. The script and print quality are dismal, the topless nudity is skin-crawling and the appearance of Boy Wonder turned lardylush Burt Ward is depressing. Even trash stalwarts Linnea Quigley and Michelle Bauer look embarrassed.

### Ebbside

Director Craig Lahiff; Australia 1994; FoxVideo G7871; Certificate 18; 98 minutes; Producers Craig Lahiff, Paul Davies, Helen Leake; Screenplay Robert Ellis, Peter Goldsworthy; Lead Actors Judy McIntosh, Harry Hamlin, John Waters, Susan Lyons  
Plodding eco-thriller, intermittently spiced up by ludicrous sex scenes. A cynical attorney (Hamlin) takes on the Pacific Poseidon Company whose toxic waste has killed a boy, but he is side-tracked by the not-very-mysterious charms of a woman (McIntosh). "You like to watch, don't you?" asks McIntosh. Well, actually, no.

### Fast Getaway II

Director Oley Sassone; USA 1994; First Independent VA 20225; Certificate 12; 90 minutes; Producer Russell D. Markowitz; Screenplay Mark Sevi; Lead Actors Corey Haim, Cynthia Rothrock, Leo Rossi, Sarah G. Buxton  
Baby-faced would-be rebel Corey Haim and glamour puss Sarah Buxton tangle with hard-nosed, golden-hearted kick-boxer Cynthia Rothrock in this unwieldy sequel. Sassone's direction shows little panache or comic flair. Even more disappointing is the sight of Cynthia Rothrock floundering in unfamiliar surroundings. Very poor.

### Heart and Souls

Director Ron Underwood; USA 1993; Universal VHA 1759; Certificate 12; 99 minutes; Producers Nancy Roberts, Sean Daniel; Screenplay Gregory Hansen, Erik Hansen, Brent Maddock, S.S. Wilson; Lead Actors Robert Downey Jnr, Charles Grodin, Kyrä Sedgwick, Alfre Woodard  
Originally slated for theatrical release in the UK, Ron Underwood's delightful, schmaltzy fantasy sat on the distributor's shelf for a year before finally being released as a superior rental premiere. A young man (Downey Jnr) is playfully haunted from childhood by a menagerie

of lost souls in need of cosmic realignment. Underwood (who directed the superb *Tremors*) manages a crucial balance between the natural and the supernatural, and the squabbling spirits provide hearty laughs.

### High Boot Benny

Director Joe Comerford; Eire 1993; Imagine IMAG 504; Certificate 15; Producer David Kelly; Screenplay Joe Comerford; Lead Actors Marc O'Shea, Frances Tomelty, Alan Devlin  
A provocative, intelligent low budget feature by Comerford which, although flawed, benefits from powerful performances by O'Shea, Tomelty and Devlin. A troubled 17-year-old delinquent takes refuge in a Southern Irish school (run by a Protestant Matron and an ex-priest) where his presence causes fear and suspicion.

### No Surrender

Director Jerry P. Jacobs; USA 1994; New Age NA 003; Certificate 15; 91 minutes; Producers Joseph Merhi, Richard Pepin; Screenplay Sean Dash; Lead Actors Corey Feldman, Ted Jab Roberts, Mako, Erin Gray  
A dopey teenage action adventure, featuring a sanitised blend of feet-and-fist fighting, conversations about the meaning of life and the occasional car chase. A high school kid discovers his hanged brother in a gym, and resolves to infiltrate the notorious Scorpion gang in search of the killer. Corey Feldman is miscast as the tough-as-nails gang leader.

### Red Scorpion 2

Director Michael Kennedy; USA 1991; First Independent VA 20221; Certificate 18; 90 minutes; Producer Robert H. Maclean; Screenplay Barry Victor, Troy Bolotnick; Lead Actors Matt Malcolm, John Savage, Jennifer Rubin, Michael Ironside  
An elite fighting group, under the instruction of an ex-Soviet agent (George Touliatos), struggles to retrieve the legendary 'spear of destiny' from a marauding band of neo-fascists. Formulaic action adventure.

### Scam

Director John Flynn; USA 1993; PolyGram PG 1036; Certificate 15; 102 minutes; Producer David Lancaster; Screenplay Craig Smith; Lead Actors Lorriane Bracco, Christopher Walken, Miguel Ferrer



## PRIVATE VIEW

Animator Candy Guard on Ken Loach's 'Riff-Raff'

# Rough humour

*Riff-Raff* isn't a comedy, which is largely why it is funny. The film's humour reminds me of a comment Billy Connolly once made that the funniest people he has ever met were not famous comedians, but the men he used to work alongside at a steelworks in Glasgow. The British sense of humour is usually noted for lavatory jokes and clever wordplay. In fact, what we have is an incredible ability to piss-take. Our infamous emotional repression is channelled into the art of the put-down rather than the hug, but it is no less affectionate. The rest of the world (especially the Americans) often mistake this 'negative' sense of humour for loathing. Personally, I'm more flattered by someone taking the piss out of me than by being hugged. But then I'm British, and, as a result, I'm fine-tuned to the subtle difference between a wind-up and an insult. It's all a matter of being able to laugh at yourself, which is the vital ingredient of comedy. Yet this intrinsically British banter rarely seems to translate to the screen, and, in particular, the big screen. Instead we are stuck with vicars, nuns and puns. We are told by the press that we will "die laughing" at films geared for the Stateside market such as *Four Weddings and a Funeral* and *A Fish Called Wanda*.

Loach steps into the gap with *Riff-Raff* and serves up a slice of grimy London life with a sense of humour. Much of the wit derives from sophisticated banter between men on a building site. When itinerant builder Ricky Tomlinson is asked to help his new workmate Stevie find a squat, he ends up delivering a tirade on the evils of Thatcherism and the state of politics in Britain. "He only asked for a fucking squat!" is the reply from his colleagues. Two of *Riff-Raff*'s most hilarious scenes are all the more funny for the fact they are tucked into this bleak picture and filmed in Loach's typical gritty style. In one, Ricky Tomlinson (again), caught taking a bath in a show house by a group of Middle Eastern women, is left muttering something about the plumbing as he tries to cover himself up. Another sequence, during the funeral of Stevie's mother, shows a Glaswegian family shouting at one another while the sister frantically scatters the ashes over them.

The relationships in the film are all the more convincing because of these tragi-comic moments, combined with the naturalistic performances you expect in a Loach film. This is especially true of the film's central relationship. The superficial synopsis of *Riff-Raff* – a group of displaced building site blokes who are at the mercy of their unscrupulous boss because they are non-union labour – does not, I admit, seem riveting. It reminds me of the union storyline in Channel Four's soap *Brookside*. I don't want that, I want juicy rows and romantic intrigue. However, when one looks deeper, there is another story within Loach's film, a tale of a young Scottish man (brilliantly played by Robert Carlyle) and his relationship with Susan (Emer McCourt), a neurotic, Irish

wannabe singer. With these two characters, Loach manages to create something that is a rarity in cinema – he gives a truly convincing account of a relationship, with all its hopes and fears.

Couples fall in love in the movies and then, give or take a murder or an embezzlement or two, usually that's it. The best aspects about relationships – their complexities and nuances – tend to be glossed over at the expense of the plot. In *Riff-Raff*, however, the relationship is the plot; we see two people, Stevie and Susan, getting to know one another in an everyday manner. The ritual of a new love affair is movingly shown – the nerves of a first meeting, the rather chaotic, reckless way people fall into living together, the tensions, closeness, expectations and rows. The film offers insightful observations on male/female relationships. At the beginning of their friendship Susan is more cautious than Stevie. After sleeping together, she insists she doesn't want to complicate her life or to be tied down. However, once the relationship is underway, and they have moved into a squat together, her views change, and she becomes clingy and insecure. This odd couple – he is taciturn and rational, she is gregarious and into horoscopes – are thrown together by their dreams. Stevie is the more realistic of the two – he wants to sell boxer shorts and coloured socks at a street market so

they can survive, whereas she dreams of becoming a famous singer. When Stevie accuses Susan of having her head in the clouds, she retorts by saying her singing ambition is more exciting than selling boxer shorts. "Boxer shorts and coloured socks," he replies, "If you are going to shatter someone's dreams, at least get it right." Once the honeymoon period is over (about a week) their roles are firmly entrenched; he gets up for work, while she lies in bed all day missing auditions. That old chestnut about who is supporting whom crops up. His silent, stoical behaviour turns her into an insecure and selfish person. The turning point comes when Stevie returns from his mother's funeral in Glasgow and finds Susan shooting up heroin in the flat, causing the relationship to break down. The revelation about Susan's drug habit is the only thing that disappoints me, excusing, as it does, her erratic behaviour. I have behaved badly in relationships before, and the only thing I'm addicted to is caffeine.

But other than this, *Riff-Raff* is full of humour, romance and tragedy – and all this without making you suspend disbelief. Forget *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, I would much rather see 'One Building Site, One Failed Relationship, One Death and a Funeral'. *Riff-Raff* is available on First Independent Video



A very British sense of fun: Ricky Tomlinson in 'Riff-Raff'

Total rubbish made, so it seems, to give the cast and crew a holiday in Miami and Jamaica. Long-time scam artist Maggie Rohrer (Bracco) is trapped by ex-federal agent Jack Shanks (Walken) into ripping off a Mafia boss. The clumsy screenplay makes occasional, ineffectual nods toward erotic thrills, but neither the cast nor director (creator of the far more enjoyable *Out For Justice*) generate interest.

## Silent Hunter

Director Fred Williamson; Canada 1994; Reflective RE 7027; Certificate 18; 92 minutes; Producer Claude Castravelli; Screenplay Errol DaSilva, Bud Fleisher, Richard Loncar; Lead Actors Miles O'Keefe, Peter Colvey, Lynne Adams, Jason Cavalier

A year after seeing his wife and child murdered, former cop turned mountainside recluse Jim Paradine (O'Keefe) runs into the wrongdoers and resolves to settle the score. The early scenes in which Jim attends his daughter's birthday party, are grimly sentimental, but the farcical wife and child murder scene is so appalling as to be funny. After that, it's downhill all the way.

## We're Back: A Dinosaur's Story

Directors Dick Zondag/Ralph Zondag/Phil Nibelink/Simon Wells; USA 1993; Certificate U; 68 minutes; Producer Stephen Hinckner; Voices John Goodman, Martin Short, Walter Cronkite, Rhea Perlman, Felicity Kendal  
Animated dinosaur romp from Steven Spielberg's Amblimation stable, featuring celebrity voice characterisations headed by John Goodman. Day-dreaming kids Louie and Cecilia are joined in New York by an outlandish collection of sassy reptiles.

## Retail

### Amos & Andrew

Director E. Max Frye; USA 1993; PolyGram 6336223; Price £10.99; Certificate 15 (S&S Video July 1994)

### Amongst Friends

Director Rob Weiss; USA 1993; PolyGram 6336243; Price £10.99; Certificate 18 (S&S December 1993)

### Blood Wedding (Bodas de sangre)

Director Carlos Saura; Spain 1981; Phase One POV 002; Price £15.99; Subtitles; Certificate U  
Based on Lorca's tragic play of the same name, *Blood Wedding* is an incredible, fiery mix of dance and passion, with choreographer Antonio Gades and his performers rehearsing a flamenco version of Lorca's work. A feast for dance lovers. (MFB No. 578)

### Boiling Point

Director James B. Harris; USA 1992; Guild GLD 51572; Price £10.99; Certificate 15 (S&S November 1993)

### Fausto

Director Rémy Duchemin; France 1992; Curzon CV0048; Price £15.99; Subtitles; Certificate 15  
Lightweight but highly agreeable debut by Duchemin which, with its erratic tone and stylish production design, reveals the director's background in commercials. Set in Paris during the mid-60s, a 17-year-old orphan, Fausto Barbarico, befriends another orphan,



## WIND UP

### By Peter Dean

In an eleventh-hour amendment to the Criminal Justice Act, the BBFC has been given retrospective powers of classification – the power to re-visit films on video, to change their certificates and, if necessary, to cut or ban them. When the Video Recordings Act became law in 1984 one of its provisions was that video labels would receive a permanent certificate in return for a large classification fee. No longer. At *The Observer's* debate on censorship, BBFC director James Ferman said "I couldn't support retrospection over nine years," yet he now has those powers.

According to video industry chief Lavinia Carey, the Home Office was obliged to respond to recommendations from the Home Affairs Select Committee, which wanted a six month free-for-all in which anyone could take the BBFC to task over any video. The Home Office has effectively headed them off at the pass, granting Ferman powers he says he will use sparingly. "If we are inundated with complaints" says Ferman, "we will obviously look at a video again. If there was a sudden rush of domestic tragedies, where children were copying a scene in a PG or U film, maybe that scene would have to be cut."

The result could be an administrative nightmare for the industry. Should a Freddy or Chucky bite the dust retrospectively, it would then be a criminal act to sell those videos at boot fairs. Matters of compensation or public notification are not addressed by the amendment.

Ferman has made it known that ratings are more likely to be revised downwards than up. *Batman* – rated 12 in the cinema, 15 on video – may well have its certificate changed, removing the ludicrous discrepancy created when cinemas had a 12 certificate and the video industry would not adopt it. However, the mind reels at what a mess these new powers could make if widely employed. Paul Brett, director of marketing and publicity for Guild Entertainment (distributor of the heavily-cut *Cliffhanger*) says: "The new law is very, very disturbing. After all, one of the first rules of justice is that you have to bring in laws that are workable. This isn't. It's complete nonsense."

Meanwhile the BBFC is cutting more videos. According to its just published Annual Report for 1993, one in ten feature films for the cinema were cut. Martial arts weaponry, combat techniques, sexually explicit language and cruelty to animals are typical examples of trimmed material. In the same year, the BBFC rated 2,961 videos, 217 of which were cut, 22 more than the previous year. In 1993 the BBFC made a pre-tax profit of £320,378.

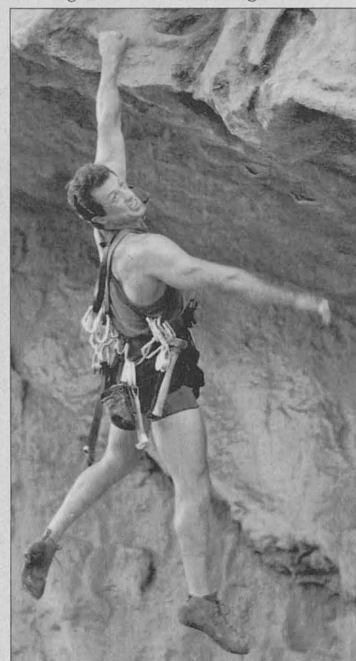
Some of Ferman's 'top-drawer' titles have now been granted a video certificate – *Beyond Bedlam*, *The Good Son*, *Bad Lieutenant* and *True Romance*. The latter, which is released uncut by Warner Home Video on December 30, is likely to benefit from six months at the censors office. "We're expecting that consumer and retailer demand will be considerably higher than before," says Warner's managing director Mike Heap. Still no

sign of *Reservoir Dogs*, *Menace II Society*, *Dirty Weekend* or *Shopping*. However, *Reservoir Dogs* has been granted a certificate in the Republic of Ireland which, according to rights holder PolyGram Video, augurs well for its UK chances. PolyGram is holding off the Irish release until the UK certificate is granted, so as not to exacerbate the video piracy problem.

A sequel to the gay drama *The Two of Us* is being partly funded by proceeds from the *Human Fish* novelty videos (see S&S November 1994). Gay video label Dangerous To Know hopes to raise 30% of a \$2 million budget for the sequel, *What Became of the Broken-Hearted*, from their videos of naked men and women swimming in a large aquarium. Leslie Stewart, who scripted the original, is directing the sequel, but he has to take two versions into account. For the UK, the BBC gave *The Two of Us* a happy ending (for straights) in which one of the male lovers returns to his girlfriend. The rest of the world saw the original in which the two men stay blissfully in love.

Paradox Films, which distributes *Pride Video*, is promoting its own special interest video series – John Major's Grey Collection or *Glad to be Grey*. "At last a video for people like me" a cartoon Major says on the front of the sleeves for *Watching Grass Grow*, *Waiting For Christmas*, *Waiting For the Kettle to Boil* and *Watching Paint Dry*.

*The Exorcist* has never been granted a video certificate but you can now buy an audiobook version of Peter Blatty's novel, with all the language intact (and featuring the chilly, lugubrious voice of Christopher Lee). WH Smith which is stocking the cassette has urged the 'spoken word industry' to implement some form of self-regulatory generic warning/certification stickers in much the same way that the computer games industry is doing, so that it doesn't run into public condemnation. Distributors Castle are considering getting video stores to stock the audiobook. There's nothing like smart marketing!



'Cliffhanger' – targeted by the BBFC

the rotound Raymond, whose speciality is playing fart tunes. Fausto becomes a successful fashion designer and creates weird and wonderful designs such as a suit made of grass. (S&S July 1994)

#### Kika

Director Pedro Almodóvar; Spain 1993; Electric Pictures E-070; Price £15.99; Widescreen; Subtitles; Certificate 18 (S&S July 1994)

#### Legacy of Rage

Director Ronny Yu; Hong Kong 1987; PolyGram 0873563; Price £10.99; Certificate 18 (S&S Video September 1993)

#### Ma Saison Préférée

Director André Téchiné; France 1993; Arrow AV017; Price £15.99; Subtitles; Certificate 15 French melodrama about two siblings Emilie (Catherine Deneuve) and Antoine (Daniel Auteuil), whose mother's long-term illness helps them come to terms with their bitterness towards one another. A film of fine detail and first-rate acting, especially from Deneuve and Auteuil, but the farcical moments sit uneasily with the mood of fraught realism. A word of warning; the subtitles are often illegible. (S&S August 1994)

#### The Meteor Man

Director Robert Townsend; USA 1993; MGM/UA S053022; Price £10.99; Certificate PG (S&S February 1994)

#### Mother's Boys

Director Yves Simoneau; USA 1993; Guild GLD 51712; Price £10.99; Certificate 15 (S&S May 1994)

#### Oliver Twist

Director Clive Donner; USA 1982; Lumiere LUM 2156; Price £10.99; Certificate PG George C. Scott as Fagin is the highlight in this otherwise unremarkable remake of the Dickens' classic. (MFB No. 598)

#### Passion Fish

Director John Sayles; USA 1993; Curzon CV 0049; Price £15.99; Certificate 15 (S&S September 1993)

#### Rising Sun

Director Philip Kaufman; USA 1993; FoxVideo 85205; Price £12.99; Certificate 18 (S&S October 1993) □

#### The Roller Blade Seven

Director Donald G. Jackson; USA 1992; MIA Video V3413; Price £10.99; Certificate 18 (S&S Video May 1993)

#### So I Married an Axe Murderer

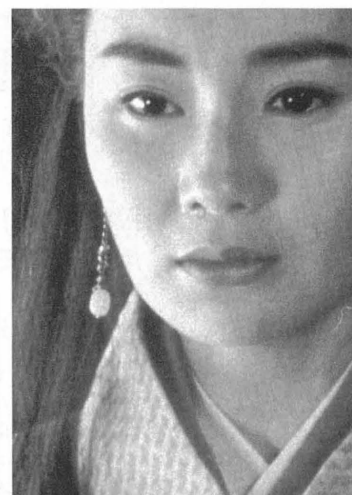
Director Thomas Schlamme; USA 1993; Columbia TriStar CVR 29800 (Widescreen: CVR 39800) Price £15.99; Certificate 15 (S&S November 1993) □

#### Tobe Hooper's Night Terrors

Director Tobe Hooper; USA 1993; MGM/UA S053022; Price £10.99; Certificate 18 (S&S Video July 1994)

#### A Touch of the Sun

Director Gordon Perry; UK 1956; Fabulous BCC 4079; Price £10.99; B/W; Certificate U Ex-hotel porter William Darling (Frankie Howerd) inherits a fortune, and after a lavish spree on the Riviera, returns to England to buy and manage the hotel where he used to work. (MFB No. 275)



High kicks: 'Moon Warriors'

#### U.F.O.

Director Tony Dow; UK 1993; PolyGram 6300503; Price £10.99; Certificate 18 (S&S February 1994)

#### Wayne's World 2

Director Stephen Surjik; USA 1993; Paramount 2897; Price £12.99; Certificate 15 (S&S March 1994)

## Retail premiere

#### Dangerous Touch

Director Lou Diamond Phillips; USA 1992; PolyGram 6336203; Price £10.99; Certificate 18; 92 minutes; Producer Lisa M. Hansen; Screenplay Kurt Voss, Lou Diamond Phillips; Lead Actors Lou Diamond Phillips, Kate Vernon Lou Diamond Phillips takes advantage of a phone-in psychologist (Kate Vernon) so as to gain access to a confidential file on an underworld boss who is one of her patients.

#### Mad Monkey Kung Fu

Director Liu Chia Liang; Hong Kong 1979; Made in Hong Kong HK 022; Price £15.99; Widescreen; Certificate 15; 111 minutes; Producer Run Run Shaw; Screenplay I Kuang; Lead Actors Hsiao Hou, Liu Chia Liang, Lo Lieh, Hui Ying Hung

A circus performer seeks revenge against an evil Triad godfather. Filmed in Shaw Scope, this martial arts extravaganza shows off Run Run Shaw's flamboyant style, with colourful sets, large crowd scenes and complex choreography giving it a big budget Hollywood feel. The print quality is excellent.

#### Moon Warriors

Director Sammo Hung; Hong Kong 1992; Made in Hong Kong HK 018; Price £15.99; Certificate 18; 83 minutes; Subtitles; Widescreen; Producer Andy Lau; Screenplay Ching Siu Tung; Lead Actors Andy Lau, Maggie Cheung, Anita Mui, Kenny Bee

Delirious feudal martial arts adventure which boasts expensive production values, well-composed widescreen images and flawless choreography. The fairy tale story about a bamboo cutter (Andy Lau) who helps a deposed king evade rebel warriors and falls in love with the man's daughter, is pure hokum. But the mix of kung fu action, Free Willy-style animal adventure (in a hilarious finale, a pet killer whale turns out to be the *deus ex machina*) and 'Manga in motion' violence makes this highly enjoyable.



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## Nazi obscenity

From Claire Keen-Thiryn

I have been reading with great pleasure the 'Chronicle of Cinema' which is offered as an addition to *Sight and Sound*. But I must comment on the information in the third part (1940-60): "1944. November. Cinema opened at Dora concentration camp near Buchenwald, as privilege for slave workers on V-1 and V-2 rocket weapons."

Dora is a concentration camp which has been singularly kept unknown, mainly because the US had found there the scientists who provided them with the way to send rockets to the moon, and certainly did not wish for the conditions of slavery they also found there to be revealed. The 'cinema' opened at the camp was designed, in the extraordinary warped thinking of the Nazi ethos, to enhance the work of the slave labourers, as was the brothel. Both were intended to extract maximum efficiency from their labourers, as entertainment and sexual fulfilment were believed to improve the workers' output. The brothels were provided with girls, mostly Jewish, of good family, but only those considered strong and healthy enough to service the crowds of inmates. Even so, they only survived for six months maximum, after being submitted to the most degrading treatment imaginable.

The brutality beyond comprehension, the lack of food, the physical difficulties of working in tunnels for over 12 hours a day, made conditions in the camp so harrowing that few, if any, actually benefited from either facility; in fact, they felt an utter aversion to services forced on them. It must not be forgotten that more than two thirds of the camp's 60,000 inmates perished between its establishment in 1943 and the liberation. This only underlines the barbarism they were submitted to.

I must add that my brother was a slave labourer there and that he died at the liberation of the camp, together with some 4,000 others. I feel that for my peace of mind, and that of the Amicale des Anciens Prisonniers Politiques de Dora-Ellrich, we would appreciate if you could add a note stating that the offer of cinema-watching on the part of the Nazis was an obscenity rather than an addition to the history of cinema as we know it.

Powys

## Blindness and salvation

From Martin Hunt

In 'Dying for art' (S&S. December), Peter Wollen provides valuable insights into *Peeping Tom*, which has always elicited fiercely divided opinions. It is unfortunate, therefore, that he does not locate it within the broader context of Michael Powell's work. The layers of observation and films-within-a-film that Powell presents, together with the appearance of the director himself, do indeed "foreground the process of looking". However, this also invites the audience to confront the dangers of observation disconnected from participation in life. The damage that such deliberate dissociation from relationships can cause to the individual human spirit is a theme already visited in

*Black Narcissus*. The one character in *Peeping Tom* with real insight and vision, Helen's mother, is denied the role of observer through her disability. These films also deal with the dark side, the obverse of another common theme in Powell's work, that of redemption through love. In both *I Know Where I'm Going* and *A Matter of Life and Death*, the main characters achieve salvation by embracing life and love. These contrasting but complementary themes are seen most explicitly in the fact that Peter Carter (the poet) is saved through his love for June, while Mark Lewis (the film-maker) perishes through his inability to accept the love offered by Helen. While Powell may have believed that the artist must be ready to die for art, his work stands as testimony to the fact that the human spirit achieves its truest salvation by embracing life.

Eastcote

## Incomplete classics

From Andrew M. Colman

Commenting on the poor picture quality of the Tartan Video release of *Sunrise*, Kevin Brownlow and David Gill (S&S December) wonder what else a silent film could have going for it but its picture quality. In fact there are other possibilities. I received a video of *Diary of a Lost Girl* from Tartan Video in February, and it had several rather serious things wrong with it:

1. Although it was marketed and described in its sleeve notes as a complete version, its running time was about 75 minutes instead of the 110 minutes of the full version, and several crucial scenes were missing.
2. There was no musical soundtrack, although the sleeve notes included a credit to Otto Stenzel for the music.
3. The subtitles in the second half of the video were often illegible (dark grey instead of white), and occasionally French and German subtitles were momentarily visible, indicating a botched attempt to paste the English translations over them.

After several begging telephone calls from me, Tartan Video eventually issued a refund for the cost of the video.

Is it right that a seriously incomplete version of a classic film should be marketed as though it were the complete version? Tartan Video's explanation to me was that there was no complete version of *Diary of a Lost Girl* in Britain. That is manifestly untrue, because BBC2 broadcast the complete version in 1986. But even if it were true, should there not be an onus on anyone attempting to peddle a seriously deficient version of any product to warn potential purchasers that what is on offer is not the real thing? If video distributors cannot get hold of reasonably complete versions of classic films, then they should not issue them at all; and if they do, the facts should be prominently displayed in all the marketing literature and on the sleeves of the cassettes.

Leicester

## Disability arts

From Avon Coalition of Disabled People

The Disability Arts Agency in collaboration with Watershed Media Centre is planning a season of films for summer 1995 looking at the representation of disability in cinema. An essential ingredient of the programme will be the screening of films made by dis-

abled film-makers. Films on any topic will be welcome. Please write/send taped information to The Disability Arts Agency, 6 Somerville Road, Bristol BS7 9AA. Bristol

## Gump not educational

From Brett L. Renwick

Regarding Martin Walker's article on *Forrest Gump*, 'Making saccharine taste sour' (S&S October), lighten up man! It's a c-o-m-e-d-y. Gump does not claim to be *The Battleship Potemkin*, *Gandhi* or *The Killing Fields* because it's a box of chocolates, not castor oil. These films too are based on manipulation, or what you refer to as "some cheating". But Gump uses technologies to change, make fun of and provoke discourse. Do you think that news programmes and entertainment shows which showed clips of the film failed to mention its whimsical slant on historical events? Get real. What scared you into spewing anti-American diatribe on the pages of a glossy magazine (featuring American actors on its cover) is our technical prowess.

But first politics, and your indictment of US foreign policy: what do India, Hong Kong, Falkland Islands or Ireland mean to you, an Englishman? As for our "introspective, isolationist self-obsession", communism is bankrupt and the Berlin Wall down because we outspent the Russians, becoming the world's police by default.

Now, if you don't mind, we have a gun problem, an immigration problem, not to mention welfare and healthcare to attend to. If we decide to make and attend superb renderings of special effects-laden fantasies, it's our prerogative. The burden of education is squarely placed in the hands of parents and teachers, not film-makers. It's called make-believe, you ninny.

Harlem, US

## Wrong ratio Dwarfs

From "Kim" Pateman

With regard to the letter from Ray Deahl (S&S September), *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* was restored to its full-height 4:3 academy-ratio. The entire picture was then shrunk to fit within a 1.85:1 ratio frame to facilitate projection on modern equipment without loss of picture area. Readers who own newer 16:9 ratio television sets are advised to select this option when viewing the video release. Deahl may be confused by the earlier restoration by YCM in which the print was zoomed to 1.55:1, or else his local projectionist was not aware of the film's requirements.

Coventry

## Titles lapse

From Dave Hughes, *The Creative Partnership*

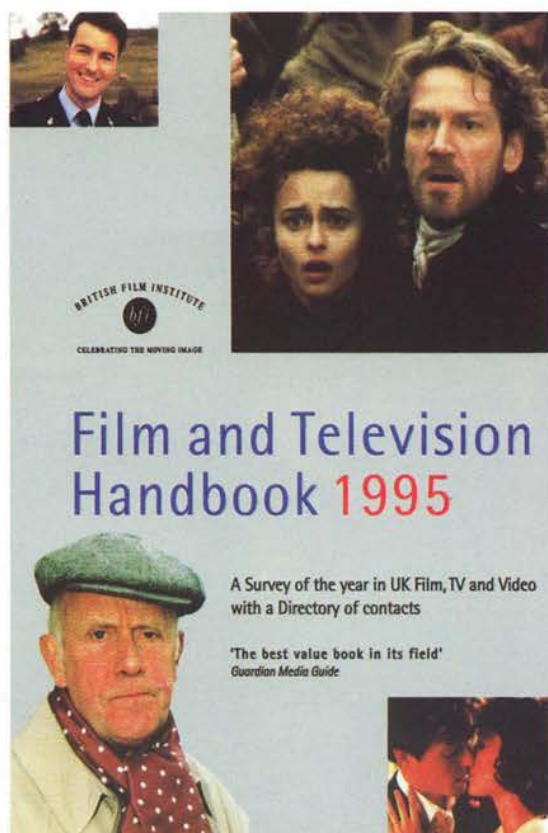
Commenting on the *Naked Lunch* title designs (S&S December), David Cronenberg forgets something actually credited in the film - that this title sequence was based on the designs of this company's Mia Matson, for pre-sales material.

London

## Additions and corrections

December 1994 p. 41 Aifei Zhenjuang should read Afei Zheng Chuan; p.50 *It Could Happen To You*: Joe Mulherin is incorrectly credited as composer. His credit should read 'Additional music'.





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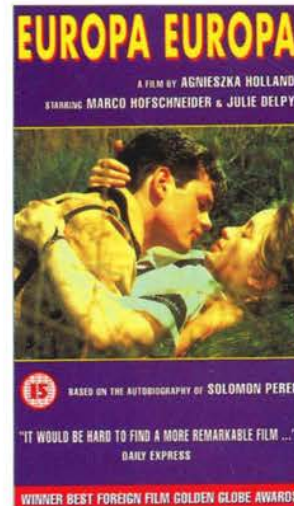


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